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Free to Deployed Areas

WAR ON TERRORISM

CENTCOM: Mosul fight to launch in April or May

By JON HARPER

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — American military officials and their Iraqi counterparts have developed a detailed battle plan to recapture Iraq's second-largest city, and a brutal urban fight could kick off as early as April, according to U.S. Central Command.

Mosul fell to Islamic State militants last

year as they swept across the country and routed much of the Iraqi army that the U.S. helped train during the Iraq War.

The "main attack force" that will try to retake the city will consist of five Iraqi army brigades, according to a CENTCOM official, who agreed to outline the battle plan for reporters on condition of anonymity. The rest of the force involved in the operation will include:

- Three Kurdish peshmerga brigades to help contain Islamic State forces from the north and to isolate them from the west.

- A "Mosul fighting force" that will comprise largely police and tribal forces as well as a brigade of counterterrorism forces.

- A reserve force of three smaller brigades.

In total, 20,000 to 25,000 Iraqi troops and

associated forces will be involved in the fight, according to the official.

U.S. military officials want the Iraqis to launch the operation in April or May.

"We want them to go in at that time frame, because as you get into Ramadan and the summer and the heat, it becomes problematic if it goes much later than that," the official said.

SEE MOSUL ON PAGE 9

EVASIVE ACTION

Lying common in the military, Army War College study says

By DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

A new study by Army War College professors found that not only is lying common in the military, the armed forces, themselves, may be inadvertently encouraging it.

The study, released Tuesday, was conducted by retired Army officers and current War College professors Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras. They found that untruthfulness is "surprisingly common in the U.S. military even though members of the profession are loath to admit it."

The paper's release follows a series of high-profile incidents involving bad behavior across the services, including a still widening corruption case involving senior Navy officers and at least two incidents in which Army generals were accused of sexual assault.

The new study found that many Army officers have become "ethically numb" in the face of overwhelming demands and the need to put their reputations on the line to verify that all required standards and training requirements have been met.

SEE LYING ON PAGE 3

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"They say Afghanistan is the worst country for a girl to be born. Hogwash!"

— Afghani first lady Rula Ghani, whose modern views and background as a Lebanese-born Christian have provoked a barrage of criticism and hostility in her country's male-dominated, Muslim society, while speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington

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MILITARY



TORIN HALSEY, WICHITA FALLS TIMES RECORD NEWS/AP

A hero's welcome

Hershel "Woody" Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima, is welcomed Friday at Sheppard Elementary School in Wichita Falls, Texas, along with about 30 other Iwo Jima survivors. The upcoming weekend marks the 24th year for the Wichita Falls event and the final reunion of the group.

AF secretary, chief of staff visit ND base

MINOT, N.D. — Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh are visiting Minot Air Force Base for a quarterly meeting of the Nuclear Oversight Board, as the military works to address problems in the nation's nuclear force.

Board members normally meet in Washington, but are getting a firsthand look this week at the Minot base's B-52 bomber and intercontinental ballistic missile missions. Both are part of the

nuclear force.

Then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered a top-to-bottom overhaul of the force in November, just days before he announced his resignation. Air Force officials and Pentagon civilian leaders acknowledged in December that problems in the force run deep and wide.

The Minot base has had its share of missteps, including a 2007 incident in which a bomber was mistakenly armed with nuclear weapons and was flown across the country to a base in Louisiana.

From The Associated Press

Iwo Jima survivors mark anniversary of bloody battle

By MARTIN KUZ
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Capt. Larry Snowden led a company of 230 Marines that landed on the beach of a small Japanese island Feb. 19, 1945. Five weeks later, when Iwo Jima fell to U.S. forces after one of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific during World War II, his unit's losses reflected the steep cost of an historic victory.

"When we walked off the island, 99 of us remained," said Snowden, 93, the senior ranking survivor of the invasion, who retired from the Marines as a lieutenant general in 1979. "That's a pretty high casualty rate."

Snowden spoke Thursday in Washington at a gathering of Iwo Jima survivors who marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the siege. Over the decades, the battle's prominence has persisted, owing to a photograph that shows five Marines and a Navy corpsman raising an American flag on Mount Suribachi, the island's highest point.

Yet it is the ferocity of the fighting that lingers in the memories of the men sent to Iwo Jima.

Snowden's company belonged to the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment of the 4th Marine Division. His unit went ashore the first day, part of the initial push of 30,000 U.S. troops, most of whom were Marines.

An additional 40,000 men later joined the struggle against 22,000 Japanese soldiers, who hid among an intricate network of tunnels and caves spanning the volcanic island 750 miles from mainland Japan.

By the time combat ended on March 26, 1945, nearly 7,000 American troops had been killed and more than 19,000 wounded. Almost 19,000 Japanese soldiers were killed as they followed the orders of Gen. Tadamichi Kurib-

For further coverage of the Iwo Jima anniversary, go to www.stripes.com/go/iwojima70

ayashi to fight to the death.

U.S. commanders realized only after the battle that they had overrated the strategic importance of the 8-square-mile island and its three airstrips. Iwo Jima nonetheless produced an incalculable morale boost to the American war effort when the photo of the six men raising the flag appeared in newspapers across the country.

Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the moment Feb. 23, 1945, the battle's fourth day, and his image endures as a symbol of American resolve in wartime. Gen. Joseph Dunford, commandant of the Marine Corps, told the survivors that their triumph has reverberated across the generations.

"The battle of Iwo Jima has become part of the very ethos of the Marine Corps," he said. Dunford added that their example inspired Marines who fought in America's most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Your legacy transcends the capture of a faraway island in the Pacific long ago."

Kenichiro Sasae, the Japanese ambassador to the United States, extolled the sacrifice of U.S. and Japanese soldiers alike. Referring to Japanese troops who defended the island as they moved underground, he said, "Mount Suribachi must have felt like a tomb waiting to be closed."

Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz remarked in 1945 that, among U.S. troops on Iwo Jima, "uncommon valor was a common virtue."

Snowden, who led his company even after shrapnel from a mortar wounded him in the neck and head, described overcoming his injuries in more modest terms.

"Part of the game," he said.

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STARS AND STRIPES

MILITARY

Bahrain barracks to house junior servicemembers

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Barracks being built on Naval Support Activity Bahrain should give the U.S. Navy here the capacity to house most of its unaccompanied E-4 and below servicemembers on base.

The Navy presence in Bahrain, which includes the U.S. 5th Fleet headquarters, has vastly grown since 2008. Over the past seven years, the base population has more than doubled, from about 3,000 to 8,300 U.S. personnel. The vast majority of personnel live off base, including E-4s and some E-3s.

The new barracks will have 241 units that will accommodate 482 servicemembers. Each unit — the Navy is using the term “apartment” — is roughly 460 square feet with two bedrooms. The vast majority of personnel live off base, including E-4s and some E-3s.

The current barracks accommodate 800 personnel — mostly Marines and sailors.

“I am 100 percent capacity on the barracks on base,” with new personnel arriving every day, said NSA Bahrain Commander Capt. David Meron. “The vast majority are young and junior. They need to be staying on base, not out in town ... until they figure out a little bit about the military way of life,” he said.

Base officials also stress force-protection concerns and the cost of housing junior servicemembers on the economy. It costs more than \$900,000 a month to house 482 junior servicemembers. At that rate, officials estimate the new barracks will pay for itself in about six years.

Construction began in March of 2013 and is progressing more slowly than expected. August is the estimated completion date on paper, but officials close to the project said that construction will realistically finish in December, with the first servicemembers

moving into the building in March of next year.

Officials cite the skill level of the local labor force as an issue, with some aspects of the construction needing to be redone. Officials with the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said that quality and safety are a priority, as is ensuring that taxpayers' money is well-spent.

Once the barracks are completed, Navy officials said, they don't plan on forcing junior service-members already living in town to move onto base; instead, they will steadily fill the barracks as personnel who are E-4 and below arrive for duty in Bahrain. The barracks should meet the expectations of today's sailors, said Chief Petty Officer Johnny Heintz, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command liaison for the project. He said the housing is quite cushy compared with what was common when he joined the Navy 18 years ago. “We're calling them apartments for crying out loud, and that's what it feels like.”

Chief Petty Officer Johnny Heintz
Naval Facilities Engineering Command

“It's going to be very good,” Meron said. Each servicemember will have a 154-square-foot bedroom and share a bathroom and a small kitchen area, which will include a minifridge and two refrigerators. Each suite will also have standard amenities such as Internet access and phone and cable connections, and each unit will have its own air-conditioning control.

The building will have several laundry rooms and bicycle storage areas. There won't be room for recreational activities, but officials said there are already several projects underway across the base aimed at improving such facilities for servicemembers living on base.



PHOTOS BY HENDRICK SIMOES/Stars and Stripes

The barracks building under construction at Naval Support Activity Bahrain will have 241 units to house 482 servicemembers. Officials expect the \$45.5 million building to be completed in December.



Left: Each unit has two 154-square-foot bedrooms with two closets. Each servicemember will have his own bedroom and share a bathroom and a small kitchen area. **Right:** The kitchen will include a minifridge and two lockable refrigerators, one for each person living in the unit.



Officials tout the fact that the building will be environmentally friendly and one of the few in Bahrain certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Solar panels on the roof will heat the water, and water from sinks will be recycled for irrigation use.

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Lying: ‘Ethical fading’ blamed for problem

FROM FRONT PAGE

The issue affects the whole military, but the professors focused their effort on the Army because they are the most familiar with it, they wrote.

They interviewed scores of officers, from captains to colonels, at several bases on the East Coast, many of whom bristled initially at the notion they colored the truth, the report said.

“When pressed for specifics on how they managed, officers tended to dodge the issue with statements such as, ‘You gotta make priorities,’ ‘We met the intent’ or ‘We got creative,’” the report said.

“Eventually words and phrases such as ‘hand waving, fudging, massaging, or checking the box’ would surface to sugarcoat the hard reality that, in order to satisfy compliance with the surfeit of directed requirements from above, officers resort to evasion and deception.

“In other words, in the routine performance of their duties as leaders and commanders, U.S. Army officers lie,” the paper concludes.

Similar issues occur when reporting the maintenance and accountability of equipment, the completion of evaluation reports for lower-ranking officers and even combat situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the professors found. Junior leaders were required to develop a PowerPoint narrative of events in a unit while deployed, and avoided doing so, one senior officer told Wong and Geras.

“Every contact with the enemy requires a storyboard,” the senior officer said, according to the paper. “People did not report enemy contact because they knew the storyboard was useless and they didn't want to go through the hassle.”

The study attributes the lies to “ethical fading,” in which outside factors subtly alter an ethical dilemma. The professors recommend reinforcing restraint and acknowledging ethical shortfalls in the military.

The issue has been addressed at high levels already. In one example, Army Gen. Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno released an ethics “white paper” last year underscoring the need to uphold strong values like honesty.

“This White Paper identifies an omission in our doctrine — the absence of an articulated, accessible, and understandable expression of the Army Ethic,” Odierno said in the document, released last July.

“The Army Ethic does exist and emanates from our foundational heritage, beliefs, traditions, and culture,” he said. “The intent, therefore, is not to invent the Army Ethic, but rather to glean its fundamental nature. Doing so is of urgent importance and is worthy of our collective wisdom and judgment.”

Tricare audit system finding far too few errors

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department's Tricare health care system would likely find significantly more claims mistakes if it looked harder, according to a recently released General Accountability Office report.

Tricare's audit system does not routinely examine medical records to determine whether a bill was accurately charged, according to the report.

As a result, the \$21 billion Tricare program reported “improper payments” of \$68 million, an error rate of 0.3 percent, in 2013. Improper payments are a catch-all category that includes underpaying and overpaying claims to patients, as well as payments that never should have been made.

In comparison, an audit of the \$357 billion Medicare fee-for-service program found \$36 billion in improper payments, a 10.1 percent error rate.

Both programs are served by many of the same health care providers and use some of the same coverage and payment policies, according to the report.

However, Medicare routinely reviews patient medical records and documentation, while Tricare does not. As a result, the Defense Health Agency, which oversees Tricare, is likely missing mistakes that Medicare's more rigorous program would catch.

The Defense Health Agency's

“basic process of reviewing claims has not changed in 20 years,” the report stated. “As a result, DHA continues to only identify improper payments due to contractor compliance problems.”

The DHA concurred with the GAO's findings. A brief response letter explained that Tricare would need an unspecified amount of time to discuss how to make changes to its improper payment measurements and methodology.

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WAR/MILITARY

Pakistan: Taliban open to peace talks with Afghans

BY SUDARSAN RAGHAVAN
AND TIM CRAIG
The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — Pakistani, Afghan and Western officials said Thursday that Afghanistan's Taliban movement is ready to engage in peace talks with the Afghan government, which could open the door to a diplomatic solution to end the Islamist insurgency that has gripped the nation for more than 13 years.

The talks could start as early as next month, although it was unclear where they would be held, the officials said. But diplomats stressed that discussions on the terms of the talks were in their initial stages and that many obstacles lie in the way of achieving any significant results.

In a visit to Kabul this week, Gen. Raheel Sharif, Pakistan's army chief, informed Afghan President Ashraf Ghani that the Taliban were amenable to peace talks, said a Pakistani diplomatic official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the news media.

However, this is the very initial phase, and it is yet to be decided when and where any such meeting between those two parties could be held," the official said. "Afghan Taliban could meet representatives of the Afghan government next month, we believe."

The Pakistani military said in a news release Thursday that Pakistan has "always supported" such a process and that any such endeavor should be "absolutely transparent, Afghan owned and Afghan led."

According to local reports, four

cities are being considered as possible venues for the negotiations: Kabul; Islamabad; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Beijing.

If the talks take place, they would represent the first direct negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government since the war began in late 2001, when U.S. airstrikes and Afghan resistance forces combined to drive the Taliban from power in Kabul after five years of harsh rule.

Although previous attempts to hold peace talks have failed, the current political, diplomatic and security environment could offer the best opportunity for negotiations. Ghani's predecessor, Hamid Karzai, remained deeply suspicious of Pakistan, but the new president has sought to improve ties with Islamabad, long a backer of the Taliban. China also has emerged as a key player, offering to broker talks.

Militarily, the insurgents are losing support within Pakistan, which launched a major offensive to flush out the militants from border areas. The war in Afghanistan is also in a stalemate, with the country's security forces suffering huge losses and the Taliban unable to retake the capital and other major cities.

Still, many obstacles remain to holding the talks. It is not known whether the Taliban's supreme leader, Mohammad Omar, has given his blessing for the negotiations. Omar has not been seen in public nor heard from in years, and some analysts suspect that he may have died.

The Taliban are also a much-altered movement these days, fragmented into factions, including ones that are even more radical.

42, reached a plea agreement in October regarding his involvement in the scheme, which prosecutors said took place in 2008 and 2009.

Authorities said Jean-Noel, who worked for a government contractor, and co-conspirators created the fictitious company to supply Afghan prison guard uniforms, but simply bought uniforms from other companies, then overbilled the U.S. government, for example, billing for 100 uniforms when they delivered 50.

Jean-Noel is scheduled for sentencing May 27.

From The Associated Press



MARVIN JOSEPH/The Washington Post

Rula Ghani, the first lady of Afghanistan, arrives at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on Wednesday.

In U.S. visit, Afghanistan's first lady balances reform, caution

BY PAMELA CONSTABLE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—Withersoft, French accent, self-deprecating laugh and modest, Western attire, Afghanistan's first lady easily charmed a Washington audience Wednesday evening at her first public appearance here in the nearly five tumultuous months since her husband, Ashraf Ghani, was inaugurated as president in September.

The warm reception contrasted sharply with the one that Rula Ghani, a Lebanese-born Christian, has received at home. Her religious background and modern views have provoked a barrage of criticism and hostility in the traditional, male-dominated Muslim society, where many women do not leave their homes unveiled.

Ghani's message here, echoed in her recent interviews and speeches, was carefully modulated to dispel her image as a crusading feminist intruder among older, conservative Afghans — but without alienating a rising generation of young, educated Afghan women to whom she is a natural role model.

The event came during a two-week visit by Ghani to the United States, where she spent much of her adult life and where her two children live. Last week, she flew to Texas for a visit with former first lady Laura Bush, who has long supported the cause of Afghan women. This week in Washington, she has attended charitable board meetings and met with Afghan and American friends. On Wednesday, she spoke before about 200 people at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington

think tank.

Ghani, 66, was educated in Paris and the United States and met her husband at the American University of Beirut. She confirmed that she is Christian but did not elaborate on her religious beliefs. Instead, she stressed the similarities between Lebanese and Afghan cultures, noted that she learned to pray in Arabic and strategically framed her comments about women within references to the Quran and Islam.

"In Islam, the place of women is an important place," Ghani said, adding that Afghan history is full of "formidable" female leaders. She noted that the wife of the Prophet Muhammad was a powerful businesswoman, and that Queen Soraya Tarzi — the stylish wife of a reformist Afghan king in the 1920s — helped launch the country's modern educational system.

Yet she played down her own aspirations for power, saying she sees her new role mostly as a "listener and facilitator" for Afghans who seek her help. She pointedly defended her immediate predecessor, Zeenat Karzai, a physician who was kept hidden from public view for years during president Hamid Karzai's rule, saying she should "not be blamed" for choosing to stay home and raise her children in seclusion.

Ghani also skirted the volatile issue of women's rights, declaring that the widely documented plight

of Afghan women — including domestic abuse, forced early marriage, bride bartering and imprisonment for dloping — has been unfairly exaggerated by the foreign press and aid organizations.

"They say Afghanistan is the worst country for a girl to be born. Hogwash!" Ghani exclaimed to laughter.

Ghani's balancing act, though carried off with grace and wit, was a direct result of the condemnation she has encountered at home, simply by virtue of her Christian faith and foreign birth, and the potential damage the new government fears such controversy can do to her Muslim husband's efforts to modernize the economically struggling, conflict-ridden nation.

Afghanistan is 99 percent Muslim, and it is a capital crime there to convert to Christianity. Moreover, the defeat of Soviet forces by Afghan religious militias and the subsequent years of Taliban rule in the 1990s made Afghan society much more conservative than in the early 1970s, when Ghani first came to live there as a bride.

The president, a cerebral former World Bank official, is in a hurry to revolutionize the country's languid, corrupt and hide-bound official culture, and he has already made many enemies. During his candidacy, a smear campaign began against his wife. Critics warned that she would seek to convert Afghan women, and doctored photos showed her husband praying in a church. There were even suggestions that he should divorce her.

But on inauguration day, the new president publicly saluted Rula as his life partner, an unprecedented gesture.

Mass. man pleads guilty to uniform fraud scam

WORCESTER, Mass. — A Massachusetts man has pleaded guilty to his role in the creation of a fictitious uniform manufacturing company that did business in Afghanistan and defrauded the U.S. government of as much as \$200,000.

Dimitry Jean-Noel, of Worcester, pleaded guilty Wednesday in U.S. District Court to conspiracy to defraud the government.

The Worcester Telegram & Gazette reported that Jean-Noel,

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NATION

Defense rests, prosecution rebuts in sniper trial

Expert witness says ex-Marine is not insane, got pig ideas from TV shows

The Associated Press

STEPHENVILLE, Texas — The ex-Marine charged with shooting "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle and another man was not legally insane, a prosecution expert said, suggesting the man may have gotten some of his ideas from the television show "Seinfeld."

Prosecutors called rebuttal witnesses Friday in the trial of Eddie

Ray Routh, 27, who is charged with killing Kyle and his friend Chad Littlefield.

Routh's attorneys, who are pursuing an insanity defense, rested their case Thursday.

Dr. Randall Price, a forensic psychologist, testified Friday that Routh had a paranoid disorder made worse by his use of alcohol and marijuana.

"In my opinion, he did know

what he was doing was wrong, and he did it anyway," Price said.

A defense witness, Dr. Mitchell H. Dunn, testified Thursday that Routh had schizophrenia and showed signs of the illness for as long as two years before the February 2013 shootings. Dunn said Routh described seeing neighbors and friends as turning into pig-human hybrids.

Price argued Routh may have gotten the idea from "Seinfeld" or the TV show "Boss Hog." In a "Seinfeld" episode, one character, Kramer, believes he has discovered a "pig-man."

"I don't know for a fact that he

saw that episode of 'Seinfeld,' but I do know that he's watched 'Boss Hog,'" Price said.

"For a long time, he's talked a lot about pigs to a lot of people. So it's suspicious."

He said Routh's actions do not meet the legal definition of insanity under state criminal law.

Routh faces mandatory life in



Routh

prison without parole if convicted of capital murder, since prosecutors have said they are not seeking the death penalty. The jury can also find Routh not guilty by reason of insanity, in which case the trial judge can begin proceedings to have Routh committed.

Routh's friends and family have testified that his behavior in the weeks before the shootings was increasingly erratic. They said he acted as if he believed that someone was going to hurt him and that the government was listening to him.

Routh did not testify during his trial.



DELICIA LOPEZ/AP

A member of the National Guard checks on his colleague inside a Border Patrol Skybox near the Hidalgo International Bridge in Hidalgo, Texas, in April 2011.

Guard troops staying on border, but questions remain on mission

By SETH ROBBINS
AND PAUL J. WEBER

The Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas — On U.S. 83, the highway that hugs the southern stretch of the Texas-Mexico border, law enforcement is everywhere.

Even on a national holiday this week, the green-and-white trucks of U.S. Customs and Border Protection circled tirelessly around the empty stretches of Rio Grande City, a hot spot for illegal border crossings. Texas state troopers pulled over vehicles, and a Border Patrol helicopter hovered above, keeping watch over the Rio Grande.

Less visible are hundreds of Texas National Guard troops who arrived last summer and are under new orders from Gov. Greg Abbott to remain indefinitely — probably at least through next year. But with migration numbers falling and the Guard moving to remote outposts, local authorities and residents are questioning the troops' continued presence here.

Previously scheduled to leave in March, Guard members who typically respond to short-term disasters like hurricanes are instead digging in for one of the longest domestic deployments in the U.S. That is despite dwindling apprehensions and an even steeper drop in unaccompanied children arriving from Central America.

It was the arrival of those children in overwhelming numbers that prompted former Gov. Rick Perry to activate the guard in the first place. Abbott said the extended mission remains necessary until Texas hires more state troopers.

The troops had been stationed mostly along the Rio Grande. But in recent weeks, their presence became less visible as the Guard began a gradual drawdown in anticipation of the mission ending in March.

Still unclear is how many Guard troops will remain, serving in their strictly surveillance role. They are armed, but they do not have arrest authority and

must call another agency at the first sign of trouble.

Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steve McCraw this week refused to disclose the total number of gun-carrying patrolmen the state has saturating the Rio Grande Valley, making a complete picture of security elusive.

The governor and state officials no longer disclose the number of Guard troops being kept on the border, citing what they call operational security.

When about 1,000 Guard troops first arrived in August, more than 6,600 illegal crossers were apprehended in the first week, according to state officials. Those numbers have since fallen to about 200 Guard members and about 2,000 weekly apprehensions.

The National Guard's lowered profile has caused some local law enforcement officials to balk at the cost of keeping them in the area. Next year, Texas will surpass \$1 billion in border-security spending since 2008.

Wis. girls describe stabbing classmate in police video

The Associated Press

WAUKESHA, Wis. — Police interrogation video of two Wisconsin girls accused of nearly killing a classmate to please a fictional character called Slender Man shows them describing their plan to kill their friend, telling her they were going to go bird watching.

"People who trust you become very glib," one of the girls told a police investigator following a May 31 attack on Peyton Leutner in a wooded area of a park in Waukesha, a community about 20 miles west of Milwaukee.

"It was sort of sad," the girl added.

WISN-TV obtained 9 hours of separate videotaped interrogations of the girls, who were both 12 at the time. One has since turned 13. In the video, one of the girls wipes away tears as she explains how they hoped to please Slender Man by killing Leutner, who survived 19 stab wounds and crawled to a path near the woods after her attackers left.

"So we told her we were going to get help, but we really weren't. We were going to run and let her pass away. So, we ran," one girl explains to a detective.

The other girl spent about 6 hours in an interrogation room, some of which she sits alone, singing to herself.

"We were going to be at my birthday sleepover. You have no idea how difficult it was not to tell anyone," the girl said to

an investigator. "Truth be told, I wanted to be locked up so I couldn't hurt her. But, that time has passed and now I'm in here because we were careless. I knew this would happen. I knew we'd get in trouble."

Both girls described the character Slender Man during their interrogations.

"He has tendrils that are very sharp," one girl said. "I see him in my dreams."

Authorities arrested the girls walking along a highway about 5 hours after Leutner was found a passing bicyclist. They told authorities they were on their way to the Nicolet National Forest in northern Wisconsin, where they thought they would join Slender Man in his mansion.

The two girls are charged in adult court with attempted first-degree intentional homicide. If convicted, each could be sentenced to up to 65 years in the state prison system. Their attorneys want their cases moved to children's court, where a conviction could send them to a secure facility until age 25.

Waukesha County Circuit Judge Michael Bohren said he intends to issue a ruling in the case March 13.

The Associated Press isn't naming the defendants because their cases could end up in juvenile court. Leutner, who turned 13 last week, has recovered from the attack and has returned to school.

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NATION

Snowden leak: NSA helped UK get phone codes

By KEN DILANIAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Britain's electronic spying agency, in cooperation with the U.S. National Security Agency, hacked into the networks of a Dutch company to steal codes that allow both governments to seamlessly eavesdrop on mobile phones worldwide, according to the documents given to journalists by Edward Snowden.

A story about the documents posted Thursday on the website The Intercept offered no details on how the intelligence agencies employed the eavesdropping capability — providing no evidence,

for example, that they misused it to spy on people who weren't valid intelligence targets. But the surreptitious operation against the world's largest manufacturer of mobile phone data chips is bound to stoke anger around the world. It fuels an impression that the NSA and its British counterpart will do whatever they deem necessary to further their surveillance prowess, even if it means stealing information from law-abiding, Western companies.

The targeted company, Netherlands-based Gemalto, makes "subscriber identity modules," or SIM cards, used in mobile phones and credit cards. One of the company's three global

headquarters is in Austin, Texas. Its clients include AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon and Sprint. The Intercept reported.

The Intercept offered no evidence of any eavesdropping against American customers of those providers, and company officials told the website they had no idea their networks had been penetrated. Experts called it a major compromise of mobile phone security.

Gemalto said in a statement Friday it could not immediately confirm the reported hack and "had no prior knowledge that these agencies were conducting this operation." The company said it "will devote all resources

necessary to fully investigate" the reported hack.

A spokeswoman for Sprint Nextel said Thursday that her company had no comment on the report, while a spokeswoman for T-Mobile said her company was referring reporters to Gemalto and declined further comment.

In addition to SIM cards, Gemalto is a leading maker of encryption systems for other business and industrial uses, including electronic payment processing and "smart" key cards that businesses and government agencies use to restrict access to computers or other sensitive facilities. "Their SIM cards would be used by most of the major

telecom operators," said Linley Gwennap, principal analyst at the Linley Group, a Silicon Valley tech research firm.

The NSA did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In the past, former agency officials have defended using extralegal techniques to further surveillance capabilities, saying the U.S. needs to be able to eavesdrop on terrorists and U.S. adversaries who communicate on the same networks as everyone else. The NSA, like the CIA, breaks the espionage and hacking laws of other countries to get information that helps American interests.

Giuliani questions Obama's love of US; Democrats cry foul

By KEN THOMAS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats on Thursday assailed former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani for questioning President Barack Obama's love of country, and urged the potential field of Republican presidential candidates to rebuke him for his comments.

Giuliani said at a New York City event on Wednesday night, "I know this is a horrible thing to say, but I do not believe that the president loves America."

"He doesn't love you. And he doesn't love me. He wasn't brought up the way you were brought up and I was brought up through love of this country," said Giuliani, who sought the 2008 GOP presidential nomination. His comments were reported by Politico and the New York Daily News.

Democratic National Committee chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said it's time for Republican leaders to "stop this nonsense."

Several likely GOP candidates declined to get involved Thursday. Giuliani meanwhile softened his remarks somewhat in an interview, saying he didn't mean to question the president's patriotism.

Asked by Fox News' Megyn Kelly whether he had demonstrated civility, Giuliani replied, "I think it was perfectly civil. I think that is a perfectly reasonable opinion."

His comments at the dinner brought to mind a familiar conservative criticism during Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns that he wasn't proud enough of the United States. During his presidency, a smaller segment falsely

claimed that Obama was not born in the United States but rather in his father's native Kenya.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Giuliani "test drove this line of attack during his fleeting 2007 run for the presidency." Asked whether the comments were appropriate, Schultz said he would leave it to those at the event to make that assessment.

The private dinner was attended by Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who is considering a 2016 campaign. Giuliani said that "with all our flaws, we're the most exceptional country in the world. I'm looking for a presidential candidate who can express that, do that and carry it out."

"And if it's you, Scott, I'll endorse you," Giuliani said, addressing Walker. "And if it's somebody else, I'll support somebody else."

Walker, asked about the comments in an interview with CNBC, did not directly address whether he agreed with the former mayor.

"The mayor can speak for himself. I'm not going to comment on whether — what the president thinks or not. He can speak for himself as well," Walker said. "I'll tell you, I love America, and I think there are plenty of people, Democrat, Republican, independent, everywhere, in between, who love this country."

Democrats said the incident reflected poorly on Walker, who has generated early presidential buzz among Republican activists in Iowa, the nation's first 2016 contest.

Asked about Obama in an interview with Fox News on Thursday, Giuliani said he wasn't "questioning his patriotism. He's a patriot, I'm sure. What I'm saying is, in his rhetoric, I very rarely hear him say the things that I used to hear Ronald Reagan say, the things that I used to hear Bill Clinton say, about how much he loves America."



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., spent the congressional recess traveling in the Middle East.

Senator takes role in decision on Obama's war powers request to heart

By LAURIE KELMAN
AND ANDREW TAYLOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two years ago, Sen. Bob Corker wondered aloud whether the standstill Senate was worth a grown man's time.

Now the combination of Republicans' political fortunes in last November's elections and brutal terrorism overseas has put the two-term Tennessee lawmaker in the limelight. He heads the Foreign Relations Committee and is in charge of the weightiest question to face members of Congress: whether to authorize war.

I think all of us want to be productive in life. It was like watching paint dry," Corker, 62, said of his first eight years in the polarized Senate. "Yes, I do find myself in this second term in a very different place. I'm very glad I ran for re-election."

Less than two months into the Republican-led Congress, Corker is shouldering closely-watched global and political challenges.

He is the face of the Senate's response to President Barack Obama's formal request to Congress for a new authorization for the use of force against Islamic State militants. And he is certain to play an outsized role in the congressional response to negotiations involving the U.S., other Western powers and Iran over its nuclear program.

As early as next week, Corker will gavel open Senate hearings on U.S. military intervention — a proxy, in some ways, for the broader debate over the nation's role in overseas conflicts in the post-Sept. 11 age of terrorism.

There's no tougher or more visible test of the party's lawmaking acumen than Obama's draft war powers request, which landed on Capitol Hill with a thud.

The U.S. military has waged an extensive campaign against the extremists for months, deploying more than 2,700 troops to train and assist Iraqi security forces and conducting airstrikes against targets in Iraq and Syria. Obama wants new authority to use

against the Islamic State group, which has sparked international outrage with videos of their beheadings of hostages and burning of a Jordanian pilot.

Obama's request is a starting point for the war debate. Corker will steer hearings on the parameters of any military action, from limits on time to its geography, and try to produce legislation that gives Obama the authorization.

The gravity of the issue, and his outsized role, isn't lost on Corker. He says he'll conduct three or four weeks of hearings in hopes of finding any common ground between Obama's request and the array of variations sought by Corker's colleagues.

"Bob starts with a prejudice for consensus," said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., a member of the Foreign Relations panel. "Bob's not going to hesitate to stand up for his values or ultimately do something ugly with members of his party, but he starts with the supposition that it's better to do something in a bipartisan way."

NATION



AARON LYNETT, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

‘Frozen’ falls is a draw

Niagara Falls State Park visitors look over masses of ice formed around the American Falls on Thursday, photographed from across the Niagara River in Canada on Thursday. Frigid temperatures have transformed the falls into an icy spectacle, encasing trees and drawing tourists who are braving below-zero temperatures for photos. The river continues to flow beneath the ice cover, so the falls aren't completely frozen over.

East feels winter's tight grip

The Associated Press

The bitter cold that has gripped the Eastern U.S. is showing no sign of letting up before the weekend as records for low temperatures were broken Friday.

The National Weather Service says the newest band of Arctic air could plunge parts of the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic into deep freezes that haven't been felt since the mid-1990s.

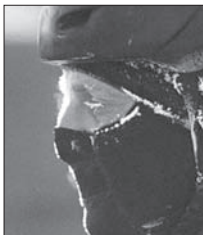
Temperatures and wind chills on Thursday dipped near zero or below in the Midwest, Northeast and even the South — where people are unaccustomed to the weather-related road hazards, school cancellations, and runs on supplies.

The cold snap followed snow and ice storms earlier in the week. The low temperatures caused much freezing and refreezing of snow, ice and roads. Weather forecasters warn that more sleet and freezing rain will be possible in the coming days.

In Embarrass, Minn., the community reported a temperature of 41 below zero Thursday — without the wind-chill factor.

Forecasters say that's the lowest recorded temperature in northern Minnesota this winter.

Bitter cold temperatures have



DAVID JONES, (MINNEAPOLIS) STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Ice coats the eyelashes of a bike rider Thursday in Minneapolis.

shattered decades-old records in Washington and Baltimore.

The National Weather Service said the low Friday got down to 6 degrees at Reagan National Airport, just across the Potomac River from Washington. That beats the record low of 8 degrees, set in 1896. At Baltimore's airport, the temperature dipped down to 2 degrees. The record was 4 degrees, set in 1979.

It warmed up enough in Chicago for students to return to class

Friday. District officials ordered a cold-weather day Thursday, when temperatures stayed in the single digits. The wind made it feel like temperatures were double digits below zero.

The forecast for Friday included high temperatures near 20 in northeastern Illinois, with wind chills near 15 to 25 degrees below zero in the morning.

The cold might not bother Disney's Queen Elsa, but it's wreaking enough havoc in Kentucky that police announced a joke warrant for the “Frozen” character's arrest.

Police in Harlan posted on Facebook: “Suspect is a blonde female last seen wearing a long blue dress and is known to burst into song ‘Let it Go!’ As you can see by the weather she is very dangerous.”

Arctic conditions have turned a geyser at a state park in western New York into a five-story-tall “ice volcano.”

The geyser is in a pond near the Glen Iris Inn at Letchworth State Park. Days of subzero temperatures have formed a solid cone of ice several feet thick with water still spouting out of the top.

Park officials told local media that the formation is at least 50 feet high.

Eggs are back on the ‘A’ list

Latest dietary recommendations also say more coffee is OK, but go easy on sugar

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An extra cup or two of coffee may be OK after all. More eggs, too. But you definitely need to drink less sugary soda. And, as always, don't forget your vegetables.

Recommendations Thursday from a government advisory committee call for an environmentally friendly diet lower in red and processed meats. But the panel would reverse previous guidance on limiting dietary cholesterol. And it says the caffeine in a few cups of coffee could actually be good for you.

The committee also is backing off stricter limits on salt, though it says Americans still get much too much. It's recommending the first real limits on added sugar, saying that's especially a problem for young people.

The Agriculture and Health and Human Services Departments will take those recommendations into account in writing final 2015 dietary guidelines by the end of the year. The guidelines affect nutritional patterns throughout the country — from federally subsidized school lunches to food package labels to your doctor's advice.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said “it is by no means over” with the release of the report. The government will take comments on the advice before distilling it — and possibly changing it — into final guidelines for consumers.

Even with the changes, the report sticks to the basic message of the previous guidelines in 2010: Eat more fruits and vegetables

and whole grains; eat less saturated fats, salt and sugar.

As far as consuming eggs goes, the report says dietary cholesterol now is “not considered a nutrient of concern for overconsumption.” This follows increasing research showing the amount of cholesterol in your bloodstream is more complicated than once thought.

The committee says available evidence “shows no appreciable relationship” between heart disease and how much dietary cholesterol you eat, but it still recommends eating less saturated fat.

Added sugars should be around 200 calories a day — about the amount in one 16-ounce sugary drink, says the advisory committee, which is made up of doctors and nutritionists.

Sodium recommendations are up to 2,300 milligrams a day for all people — even those most at risk for heart disease — up from the 1,500 milligram suggestion in 2010.

The report looks at caffeine for the first time, and says coffee is OK — even good for you. The panel says there is strong evidence that 3 to 5 cups a day can be part of a healthy diet, and there's consistent evidence that it's even associated with reduced risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

The advice comes with some caveats — don't add calories with cream, milk and added sugars. The report also advises against large-size energy drinks, and it recommends pregnant women limit caffeine to two cups of coffee a day.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

The government suggests drinking less soda, watching added sugars and loading up on vegetables.

Look for the 70th Anniversary

Victory at Iwo Jima

special feature in your Feb. 23 issue.

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NATION



LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT/AP

A police official leads Erich Nowisch, 19, from a car to police headquarters for questioning in Las Vegas on Thursday.

Neighbor arrested in road rage killing

By Ken Ritter
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Police took an important step toward solving the mystery surrounding the killing of a Las Vegas mother outside her home, arresting a teenage neighbor who had a history with the husband that reached a boiling point the night of the shooting.

Erich Nowisch, 19, was arrested on suspicion of murder Thursday after SWAT teams surrounded his home a block away from the residence of victim Tammy Meyers. Las Vegas police Capt. Chris Tomaino said detectives believe Nowisch was the gunman. He was arrested on a murder warrant, but not been formally charged.

Tomaino said police are seeking a second suspect.

Police and the family of the victim have characterized the case as a road rage altercation that escalated into the deadly encounter a week ago. The exact circumstances of the fight remained unclear, but the family knew the suspect, said Robert Meyers, the victim's husband.

He said Tammy Meyers took on a nurturing role for Nowisch, giving him money and food and urging him to dress properly.

"We know this boy," Robert Meyers said. "I couldn't tell you this before. He knew where I lived. We knew how bad he was, but we didn't know this was his bad."

The case has received significant attention since police initially said Meyers was killed by an angry driver who followed her home after she gave her teenage daughter a driving lesson.

She was removed from live support on Valentine's Day as police hunted for a suspect, and donations for her funeral costs quickly poured in to a fundraising site.

The sympathy morphed into skepticism, and the fundraising site was shut down after police revealed that Meyers was not followed home and instead dropped her daughter off and picked up her son, Brandon, who was armed with his 9-mm handgun, to try to convince the driver who had frightened her earlier.

They went looking for the driver, followed the vehicle and eventually went home. The silver car then showed up outside the Meyers' home and a shootout occurred, police said. The mother was shot in the head outside the home.

Melissa Mours, who lives next door to the suspect, said several people showed up at her neighbor's house this week and knocked on the door, including at least one Meyers family member.

Earlier, as authorities worked to coax the suspect to surrender, Robert Meyers arrived and was emotionally distraught as he tried

'We know this boy. I couldn't tell you this before.'

Robert Meyers
husband of slain road rage victim

to get close to the home that police had surrounded.

As he walked past the yellow police tape, he was stopped by a police officer who tried to calm the man down.

"It's the officer could be heard telling him. "No, it ain't OK!" the husband shouted back, his voice breaking up. The officer asked the man to step back behind the yellow tape, and he stormed off past reporters.

"Are you all happy? You made my wife look like an animal," he told reporters. "There's the animal, a block away!" He said outside his home later Thursday that his wife spent countless hours "crying this boy."

"She fed him, she gave him money, she told him to pull his pants up and be a man," Robert Meyers said.

Neighbor Brian Atkinson said he was awakened at about 11:30 a.m. by bullhorns and the sound of a helicopter as police showed up to arrest the suspect.

"They were calling his name and telling him to come out — that they had the house surrounded and they weren't going to hurt him," said Atkinson, 57, a former police officer. "They told him they weren't going to go away."

LA hospital 'superbug' takes toll

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Among the seven people infected by a "superbug" outbreak tied to medical instruments at a Los Angeles hospital is an 18-year-old student who has spent nearly three months in the hospital and is in grave condition, his attorney said.

The young man was struggling not to become the third of those infected at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center to die, Attorney Kevin Boyle said Thursday.

He had entered the hospital for a procedure that involved using an endoscope to examine his pancreas.

"They were scoping it out, trying to see what was the matter," Boyle said. "He had no life-threatening condition before like he does now."

At least seven people — two of whom died — have been infected with a potentially lethal, antibiotic-resistant strain of bacteria known as carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE, after undergoing similar endoscopic procedures. More than 170 other patients may also have been exposed, hospital officials said.

Boyle declined to release the teenager's name or say where he attends school but said he spent 83 days in the hospital at one point and was released but recently relapsed and is currently hospitalized.

"After he had the procedure he was healthy and then he came down with his illness, and when they studied him and noticed he



DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

A research assistant with the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA carries a portable cooler on Thursday.

had the CRE bacteria in him they quickly put two and two together," he said.

He said the family doesn't blame UCLA but is considering suing the endoscope's manufacturer.

That hard-to-clean medical instrument used on more than half a million people in the U.S. every year has become the focus of the outbreak investigation.

The infections may have been transmitted through two contaminated endoscopes that were used to diagnose and treat pancreatic and bile-duct problems. The instruments were found to have "embed-

ded" infections even though they had been cleaned according to manufacturer's instructions, said Dr. Robert Cherry, the hospital's chief medical and quality officer. Five other scopes were cleared.

Hospital officials said they immediately removed contaminated medical devices and adopted more stringent sterilization techniques.

CRE infections have been reported at hospitals around the country, and some have been linked to the type of endoscope used at UCLA. The duodenoscope is a thin, flexible fiberoptic tube that is inserted down the throat to enable a doctor to examine an organ. It typically has a light and a miniature camera.

The manufacturer of the devices, Olympus Corp. of the Americas, an arm of Japan's Olympus Corp., said in a statement that it emphasizes the importance of meticulous manual sterilization of its instruments.

It says it is giving new supplemental instructions to users of the endoscopes and is working with federal officials on the infection problem.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Thursday issued an advisory warning doctors that even when a manufacturer's cleaning instructions are followed, germs may linger.

The CDC's complex design and tiny parts make complete disinfection extremely difficult, the advisory said.

Ferguson officials: No word on 2 probes

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Ferguson leaders said Thursday they haven't heard from the U.S. Department of Justice regarding two federal investigations, one into the shooting death of Michael Brown in August and the other into the practices of the city's police department.

Earlier this week, Attorney General Eric Holder said he expected the Justice Department to announce the results of those investigations before he leaves office. His successor will likely be confirmed within weeks.

Ferguson City Attorney Stephanie Karr and Mayor James

Knowles III said they have not been contacted by the Department of Justice about any findings, nor given a timeline for completion of the investigations, which began soon after Darren Wilson, a white Ferguson officer, fatally shot the unarmed, black 18-year-old on Aug. 9.

The shooting raised concerns about the racial makeup of the mostly white police department and its relationship with the suburban St. Louis community, which is about two-thirds black. A St. Louis County grand jury in November declined to indict Wilson.

"They have not contacted us," Knowles said. "We haven't had

any recent conversations with the Department of Justice, so we don't know what they're going to say."

Knowles said city leaders have cooperated fully, but conversations with justice officials have been few since the early days of the investigation. He said the only recommendations given to Ferguson so far came months ago, when justice officials told officers they must wear their name tags while working but avoid wearing bracelets in support of Wilson when on duty.

"We've heard nothing about any wholesale changes they see as necessary for our police department," Knowles said.

Detroit father, stepmom jailed on torture charges

The Associated Press

DETROIT — The father and stepmother of a Detroit boy are in jail after prosecutors charged them with torture and child abuse in an unusual case that began last year when they claimed he had disappeared.

Not-guilty pleas were entered Friday by a magistrate as Charlie Bothuell IV and Monique Dillard-Bothuell appeared in court by video from jail. No defense lawyers were present. Bond was set at \$500,000.

They're accused of physically abusing 13-year-old Charlie

Bothuell V and forcing him to live in the basement. That's where he was found last June after a highly publicized 11-day search by police. His father claimed he had disappeared.

Charlie was 12 at the time. His father and stepmother have denied any abuse.

The Wayne County prosecutor's office said Bothuell IV and Dillard-Bothuell systematically physically abused the child, forced him to live in the basement and didn't allow him to socialize.

In a statement, prosecutors said the boy was deprived of food

and forced to engage in an "extreme and unreasonable exercise regime." The father and stepmother earlier denied any abuse took place.

The state Department of Human Services has said the father acknowledged striking his son with a PVC pipe, and said in a court filing last year that the boy told authorities he was forced to rise before dawn for intense workouts of 100 pushups and even more sprints.

Detroit police arrested the Bothuells on Friday morning, the prosecutor's office said.

WAR ON TERRORISM



BRIAN JANSSEN/AP

A Kurdish peshmerga soldier stands guard in January overlooking the road between Mosul and Tal Afar in Iraq.

Mosul: Planned operation to be 'difficult'

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The shaping for Mosul is going on now. The preparation for the forces that will participate in Mosul is ongoing right now."

The Iraqis have identified the units that will take part in the attack, but the official declined to name them.

Although plans are moving forward, the official acknowledged that much remains to be done before the attack can happen.

The U.S. and its coalition partners still have to train and equip the five Iraqi brigades that will constitute the main attack force. That process normally takes four to six weeks once they are in the training pipeline, according to the official. Then, the forces will have to be postured and positioned correctly before they move in.

The attack on Mosul will be postponed if it looks as though the Iraqis aren't up to the task.

"If they're not ready, if the conditions are not set, if all the equipment that they need is not

physically there and they are not trained to a degree in which they will be successful, we have not closed the door on continuing to slide that [timeline] to the right," the official said, but "they are moving forward as if they will execute in the [April-May] time frame."

Although there is no intention of committing large numbers of U.S. ground forces to the fight, CENTCOM will assist with equipment, logistics, air support, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, according to the official.

A more risky option under consideration is sending in American special operators to call in airstrikes to aid the Iraqi army.

"It's a matter of whether we take it one level higher and we actually accompany with [special operations forces] and [joint tactical air controller] teams to provide just a little bit more precise fires," the official said. "We are looking at all the things that are out there; what is the final enemy disposition in Mosul, how

precise will the fires need to be in relationship to the forward line of troops ... and those types of things."

The official said that military leaders will weigh those issues, but the ultimate decision about sending in forward air controllers will be made by President Barack Obama.

When asked why CENTCOM had agreed to reveal so many details of the campaign plan to reporters, the official said that the command wanted to demonstrate "the level of commitment that [the Iraqis] have to this and the significance of this upcoming operation."

Officials estimate that the Islamic State has 1,000 to 2,000 fighters in Mosul, and they have had plenty of time to build up their defenses.

"Mosul will not be easy," another CENTCOM official told reporters. "It's going to be a difficult fight."

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Islamic State in danger of losing supply route

By ERIN CUNNINGHAM
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — For weeks, U.S.-backed forces have been fighting to oust the Islamic State from key areas of northern Iraq in a series of small-scale battles that could have an enormous impact on the group's "caliphate."

A major prize in the clashes is a highway that serves as a lifeline for the Islamic State. It runs from the group's Iraq stronghold in Mosul to its enclaves in northeastern Syria, including its self-styled capital, Raqqa, 300 miles away.

The battles are occurring as Islamic State is causing growing alarm internationally over its brutal attacks, which have included the murder of a captured Jordanian pilot and the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians by Libyan adherents of the extremist group.

In late January, however, Islamic State fighters suffered a setback as Iraqi Kurdish forces seized a stretch of the key highway at the town of Kiske, west of Mosul.

The Islamic State is still using the highway, detouring onto back roads to get around Kiske. But if the Iraqi Kurdish fighters can maintain and expand their hold on the road, the Islamist extremists "will be under a kind of siege in the area. It will be very hard for them" logistically, said Hisham al-Hashemi, an Iraqi researcher who is an expert on the radical group.

Blocking the highway would pressure the Sunni fighters to rely on lengthier and potentially riskier routes to transport people, cash and weapons, analysts say.

The road has been controlled by the jihadists since last summer. The peshmarga fighters from the semi-autonomous Kurdish region

in northern Iraq launched the series of battles in December. The operation initially targeted Sinjar — an Iraqi town bisected by the crucial highway. But after fighting there stalled, Kurdish forces broadened their offensive.

The Islamic State had seized Mosul in June, annexing the Iraqi territory to Syrian terrain already under the group's control. That month, Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate over the thousands of square miles of land it had seized.

The loss of the highway between Mosul and Raqqa would be not just a logistical defeat for Islamic State, but also a psychological one, analysts say.

"The integrity of the caliphate — it's built on continuous military victory," said Jessica Lewis McFate, research director at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

The "caliphate" could lose legitimacy in the eyes of its supporters if it is unable to defend the land it has taken, she said.

Without their vital supply line, Islamic State operatives would be vulnerable in Mosul, which is increasingly isolated as Kurdish forces close in. They also would have to use alternative supply routes to Raqqa that meander through the harsh desert or expose them to dangers such as airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition or confrontations with Iraqi security forces, analysts say.

If Islamic State convoys can no longer follow the main highway to Raqqa, which crosses the border at the al-Hasakah district in Syria, they could be forced to travel to the next-closest crossing they control, located at al-Qaim, 260 miles away.

But coalition warplanes have been raiding the al-Qaim area.

UN envoy unveils temporary 'breakthrough' accord in Yemen crisis

By PATRICK J. McDONNELL
AND NABIH BULOS
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

SANAA, Yemen — The United Nations envoy in Yemen on Friday unveiled a new temporary accord meant to help alleviate the political and security crisis enveloping the Arab nation.

Jamal Benomar, the U.N. envoy here, called the deal an "important breakthrough" in ongoing talks meant to avoid Yemen falling into civil war or disintegrating into further chaos. On his official Facebook page, he voiced the hope that the accord could

pave the way for a "comprehensive settlement" of the nation's political and leadership crisis.

Still unclear is the future of the presidency and government institutions. Negotiations with political groups are ongoing, the U.N. envoy said.

Since September, the capital has been in the hands of the Houthis, a northern faction allied with Iran that has emerged as the nation's most powerful armed force. Groups in the south and elsewhere have declared the Houthi takeover a coup, an accusation denied by the Houthis.

Diplomats and others have voiced fears that Yemen could collapse as a nation-state or fall into open warfare based on tribal, sectarian and regional alliances.

The nation is home to al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, viewed as among the most powerful branches of the global terror network. The Houthis have been fighting al-Qaida and view the group as a mortal enemy.

The Houthis, who say their aims are democratic, have placed U.S.-backed President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi and members of his government under house ar-

rest. The group dissolved parliament and announced plans to establish a presidential council to run Yemeni affairs on an interim basis.

The United States and other nations, including Saudi Arabia, Yemen's northern neighbor, have withdrawn their diplomatic missions from Sanaa. The U.N. has called on the Houthi leadership to pull back from government institutions.

There was no immediate word from the Houthis or other political factions here on the latest U.N. plan.

The accord revives the current parliament, whose future had been uncertain, and creates a People's Transitional Council made up largely of "unrepresented components" in the country's governing structure. At least half of the new body's members will be from the south, the U.N. envoy said, while 30 percent of seats would be reserved for women and 20 percent for youths.

A new National Council made up of parliament and the transitional body would have powers to pass legislation during the "transitional phase," the U.N. envoy said.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Ukraine: Attacks continue despite cease-fire

By JIM HEINTZ

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Separatist rebels fired on Ukrainian positions nearly 50 times in the past 24 hours, and Russia is sending more tanks into Ukraine despite a cease-fire that was supposed to take effect five days ago, a Ukrainian military spokesman said Friday.

The report, which came a day after the Russian-backed rebels captured the key rail hub of Debaltseve, raises the question of whether weeks of high-level diplomacy aimed at producing a cease-fire and peace plan for eastern Ukraine simply allowed the rebels to redouble efforts to grab more territory.

The village of Kurakhovo, west of the rebel stronghold of Donetsk, was hit by fire from Grad rockets, and the village of Berdyansk, near the key port city of Mariupol, was hit overnight by artillery and mortar fire. Lt. Col. Anatoliy Stelmakh said Friday.

He said Russia was still moving military equipment into Ukraine, including 10 tanks brought into Novoazovsk, near Mariupol.

Concerns have risen that the rebels are still gunning to take Mariupol, a government-held



VADIM GHIBSA/AP

Maxim, 8, walks inside the damaged apartment building where his family lives in Debaltseve, Ukraine, on Friday.

city on the Sea of Azov between mainland Russia and the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed last March. Taking the city could allow the rebels to create a land bridge between Russia and Crimea, which now have no direct links.

On Thursday, the rebels cel-

ebrated their victory over Ukrainian forces in Debaltseve, a key transport hub linking the two largest rebel strongholds. Rebel fighters roamed the town's debris-littered streets, laughing, hugging and posing for photos, although the death of one fighter when his vehicle hit a land mine

was a reminder of dangers still lurking.

Ukrainian soldiers who made it out of Debaltseve alive on Thursday described weeks of harrowing rebel shelling, followed by a chaotic, hasty retreat. Ukrainian officials said 13 soldiers had been killed, 157 were wounded in the

fighting, 90 were taken prisoner and 82 were missing — but the shell-shocked soldiers themselves spoke of many more casualties.

"Starting at night, they would fire at us just to stop us from sleeping. They did this all night," a Ukrainian soldier named Andrei said Thursday after fleeing Debaltseve. "Then, in the morning, they would attack wave after wave. They did this constantly for three weeks."

The war in eastern Ukraine has killed more than 5,600 people and forced over a million to flee their homes since fighting began in April, a month after Russia annexed Crimea. Russia denies arming the rebels or supplying fighters, but Western nations and NATO point to satellite pictures of Russian military equipment in eastern Ukraine.

French and German leaders, who oversaw a marathon peace talks last week between the presidents of Russia and Ukraine, signaled Thursday they were determined to salvage the cease-fire agreement and keep the two sides talking despite the fall of Debaltseve.

In Kiev, nationalists criticized the government for allowing the town to fall and not supporting its defenders enough.

US-Russia relations to take 'a lot of energy to manage'

By MIKE DORNING

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The fractured relationship between U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian leader Vladimir Putin has reached a critical juncture in the conflict over Ukraine, with ties between the two nations more strained than at any time since the Cold War.

Russia's annexation of Crimea last year and its support for separatists in Ukraine's east have soured Obama on Putin and prompted U.S.-led sanctions that have helped push Russia's economy toward recession.

The confrontation "will continue and could escalate pretty easily," said Fiona Hill, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and author of "Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin."

The standoff between Obama and Putin complicates efforts to defuse the Ukrainian conflict, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel has taken the lead. The U.S. also needs Russia's help in the Iranian nuclear talks and in trying to thwart Islamic State in the Middle East.

Putin long said that Obama took a different view, beginning his presidency by offering Russia a "reset" and new era of cooperation. These days, he fulminates that Putin views the world through a "Cold War lens" of the past.

The relationship frayed almost as soon as Putin regained Russia's presidency in 2012.

Initially, Obama and his aides saw the Russian leader's return as little more than a routine transition. Instead, Putin's fears of U.S. and European encroachment intensified with the toppling of a friendly government in Ukraine just as he was facing criticism for taking the Kremlin's top post

for a third term, a former White House aide and Russia scholars say.

"We're in for a long and troubled relationship that's going to take a lot of energy to manage," said Michael McFaul, Obama's one-time ambassador to Russia and an architect of the administration's early outreach. "I do not believe it's possible to pivot back into a second reset."

The differences between Obama and Putin seem personal. They needle each other publicly, with Obama once comparing the Russian leader to a "bored kid" slouching in the back of the classroom. Putin granted asylum to fugitive U.S. security contractor Edward Snowden and lectured Obama on the dangers of American exceptionalism in an opinion article published in The New York Times in September 2013.

The Obama administration didn't appreciate the change in direction that was coming in 2011 when Putin, who had stepped back from the presidency to become prime minister, decided to run for the office again rather than back the re-election of his ally, Dmitry Medvedev, who was nearing the end of his term.

"We underestimated how big a change that was," said McFaul, now a political science professor at Stanford University. "I briefed the president with the view that there should be continuity since we assumed Putin played a central role in foreign policy."

McFaul traces the undoing of the reset policy to Putin's response to street demonstrations against the regime in December 2011 following allegations of fraud in parliamentary elections.

Putin, a former KGB officer, rallied his political coalition with charges that the U.S. government was behind the protests. The Westward-looking urban middle class



ALEXEI NIKOLSKIY, IRAR-TASS, ABRACA PRESS/TNS

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin talk during a meeting at the 2013 Group of Eight Summit in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland, before their confrontation over Russia's annexation of Crimea last year.

largely deserted Putin in his presidential bid, making him more dependent on conservative segments of society.

"Had there been no demonstrations against the regime, the U.S.-Russia relationship might have had a different trajectory," McFaul said. "It was those events that drove how Putin pivoted against the United States."

Putin saw a hidden U.S. strategy of "regime change" in the street protests, as well as in the advice U.S. and European officials were privately giving to Russians against his campaign for another presidential term, the hostile Western media coverage and the later ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, according to Hill.

"He is convinced, completely convinced, that we are a threat to Russia, that we overthrow him," Hill said. "He's trying to teach us a lesson."

For a period after Obama took office in 2009, there was public warmth. The fallout from Russia's 2008 incursion into Georgia

was put aside with a promised revamp of the U.S. approach. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented her Russian counterpart a red reset button to symbolize the hope for a new beginning.

During the 2012 U.S. presidential election campaign, Obama scoffed when Republican candidate Mitt Romney called Russia the United States' "number one geopolitical foe," caricaturing his opponent as stuck in the Cold War past.

Yet underlying tensions were never resolved, said Peter Rutland, a Russia scholar at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. These originated in Russian leaders' view that the U.S. and its allies are interfering with the country's interests as the NATO alliance and the European Union expanded to include former Soviet satellites.

The personal dynamics between Putin and Obama also have been a constant obstacle, Charap said.

"The good rapport between Obama and Medvedev was key to getting things done," he said. "It's just harder with Putin."

WORLD

Many killed in Somalia attack

By ARDI GULED
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — Government officials were meeting at the Central Hotel in Somalia's capital when an Islamic extremist rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the hotel gate, and another went in and blew himself up, killing at least 10 people on Friday, officials said.

Mogadishu's deputy mayor and a legislator were killed in the attack, a lawmaker said, and the country's deputy prime minister was among the wounded, said a police official.

The attack is the latest blow to the Somali government's efforts to contain the deadly insurgency by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab that, despite the loss of key strongholds in Somalia, continue to stage attacks in the capital and elsewhere. The Islamic insurgent group claimed responsibility for the twin suicide bombings, according to the group's radio station, Aundulus.

"We can confirm that more than 10 persons, including politicians and soldiers were killed in that horrific attack," said Capt. Mohamed Hussein, a senior Somali police officer.

The blast ripped off large parts of the hotel's wall and smoke blackened its facade. Two dead bodies were lying outside the hotel in Mogadishu, and a wounded man struggled to stand up, but immediately collapsed as blood gushed from his abdomen. Soldiers had cordoned off the area.

Terrified pedestrians ran through the streets, with one survivor recounting the bloody scene.

"Disaster, limbs were flying scattered around like tissue papers," said Muhyadin Dahir, who was dust-faced and bloodied.

Somali legislator Omar Ali Nor and Mogadishu's deputy mayor Mohamed Aden are among the dead, said lawmaker Mohamed Ali.

Deputy Prime Minister Mohamed Omar Arte was rushed to a hospital, and was among several other high-ranking government officials at the hotel at the time of the attack, said Hussein.

Somalia's president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud condemned the attack on the hotel, saying it would not derail efforts by his government to restore peace to Somalia which is recovering from decades of war.



SEBASTIAN SCHEINER/AP

Snow-covered shrine

The Dome of the Rock Mosque at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of Jerusalem is covered with snow Friday. A heavy winter storm descended on parts of the Middle East, with snow forcing the closure of all roads leading into and out of Jerusalem and sprinkling Israel's desert with a rare layer of white.

Greece, creditors try to bridge impasse

By LORNE COOK
AND RAF CASERT
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Greece and its European creditors on Friday sought to bridge major differences over Athens' request for a six-month loan extension that might keep it from falling out of the euro.

Facing the Greek request was the insistence by several eurozone nations, led by Germany, that there would be no escaping the painful reforms, spending cuts and tax increases long demanded of Athens in exchange for the loans.

Friday's meeting was the third among finance ministers from the 19-nation eurozone in just over a week as Greece's European bailout program is due to expire on Feb. 28.

If no deal is reached by then, the country faces the risk of bankruptcy and an eventual exit from the single-currency union — a move that neither side wants as it would create huge uncertainty for the country and region.

Friday's emergency meeting was called to respond to the left-wing Greek government's demand for more time to finalize its current bailout program and negotiate new arrangements with its partners that will be less onerous on Greek citizens.

A deal at the talks is far from certain.



THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/AP

A man walks past a sculpture of Greece's old one-drachma coin in central Athens on Friday.

The proposal did not promise to continue all of the budget cuts and reforms that the eurozone has been adamant it should stick to. Germany, the most influential creditor, has claimed Greece's latest proposal is a "Trojan horse" to help the government dodge its commitments.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras swept to power last month on a pledge to ease the budget belt-tightening and reorganize the \$272 billion bailout debt.

So far, the government has sometimes sent out mixed mes-

sages which did not go down well with the other eurozone nations and European Union institutions.

"The Greeks have acted like elephants in a China shop," German EU Commissioner Guenther Oettinger told Deutschlandfunk Friday. "Now they slowly realize what the real numbers are. But they have already done quite a bit to save the confidence of their European partners."

The EU Commission distanced itself from Oettinger's remarks, saying that he spoke in a personal capacity.

Scores killed in Libya bombings

By ESAM MOHAMED
The Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya — Libyan officials say the death toll from suicide bombings in an eastern town has reached at least 45.

The deaths came in three suicide bombings in the town of Qubba.

In the deadliest, an attacker driving an ambulance packed with explosives rammed into a gas station where motorists were lined up, army spokesman Mohammed Hegazi said.

Two other bombers detonated vehicles next to the house of the parliament speaker and the security headquarters in Qubba, about 19 miles from Darna, a stronghold of Libya's Islamic State branch.

Two security officials say at least 45 people were killed. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press. Government spokesman Mohammed Bazaza put the toll at 42 but said it would likely rise.

Conflicting tolls are common in the aftermath of large attacks. Hospital officials and others in Qubba could not immediately be reached for comment.

The bombings underscore the utter turmoil this North Africa country has sunk into.

They came a week after a video showed the beheadings of 21 abducted Egyptian Coptic Christians at the hands of Libya's branch of the Islamic State group.

The brutal slayings drew Egyptian airstrikes on Islamic State positions in Libya and raised concerns that the extremist group has spread beyond the battlefields of Iraq and Syria and established a strategic foothold closer to European shores.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which Hegazi said bore the hallmarks of Islamic militants who have battled the army for months in and around the eastern city of Benghazi.

Parliament Speaker Ageila Saleh announced a seven-day mourning period in his home town and insisted that Friday's bombing in Qubba was revenge for the Egyptian airstrikes.

Libya has been engulfed in violence and chaos four years since longtime dictator Muammar Gadhafi's ouster and death.

The country is now split between two rival parliaments and governments. One is based in the capital, Tripoli, and is backed by militias allied with Islamist factions, while the other is the elected parliament, which was forced to relocate and hold sessions in the far eastern city of Tobruk, near the Egyptian border.

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OPINION

Poll shows Americans want to hear speech

By JOSH ROGIN
Bloomberg News

How do Americans feel about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing Congress next month? According to one new poll, more support it than object — despite the controversy over the way he was invited.

The data, reported here for the first time, was commissioned by The Israel Project, a pro-Israel group. It adds important context to a CNN/ORC poll, released Tuesday, which showed that 63 percent of Americans disapprove of the way House Speaker John Boehner invited Netanyahu to the joint session. Boehner said Sunday that he had intentionally kept his plans secret from the Barack Obama administration, because he feared White House “interference” with the speech, now scheduled for March 3.

While it may be true that most Americans don't like Boehner's tactics, it's not the case that they don't want Netanyahu to go through with it. According to the TIP data, 25 percent of 1,563 respondents to the new poll said they agreed more with the statement: *Some people say Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is in the middle of an election at home, and it is inappropriate for the U.S. to host him for a speech only two weeks before the election is being held. They say this is an irresponsible attempt to make Netanyahu look stronger before his election.*

While 43 percent of respondents said they agreed more with the following statement: *Other people say Iran is getting closer to building a nuclear weapon. As one of the world's most responsible leaders, it is on the Middle East and the Iranian nuclear program, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu should address Congress before the*



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem on Sunday.

ABIR SULTAN/AP

March 31st deadline for a political framework with Iran.

Those are detailed questions for a news survey, which was conducted by Paragon Insights, and one can debate whether the reference to Netanyahu's credentials was relevant. Nonetheless, the responses make clear that more Americans than not now believe it's a good idea to let Netanyahu make his case.

Also, more respondents than not (47 percent to 32 percent) disapprove of the way the administration has reacted to the coming speech. Obama, Vice President Joseph Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry have all said they won't meet with Netanyahu while he is in Washington, citing a desire not to interfere in the Israeli elections coming March 17.

Breaking down the numbers a different way, the poll asked respondents whether it was appropriate to let Netanyahu speak to Congress considering he is so close to his own election. Only 22 percent of respondents said that Netanyahu should be

barred from speaking because of his personal political interests.

Several Democratic lawmakers have pledged to boycott the Netanyahu speech, but the poll suggests that this might have a political cost. More than a third of respondents said they would be less likely to vote to re-elect their congressman if he or she boycotted the speech, while 27 percent said it would make them more likely to support re-election.

“The numbers are stark,” said Omri Ceren, The Israel Project's managing director for press and strategy. “Even Americans who may be ambivalent about how the Netanyahu speech came together ... would be less likely to vote for a congressman who boycotted.”

The poll was conducted from Feb. 12-16 by Paragon's Nathan Klein, who has been a pollster for the National Republican Senatorial Committee. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. Just over half of respondents described themselves as “supporters” or “strong supporters” of Israel.

Taken together, the CNN and TIP polls show that Americans are unhappy with both the public and congressional leadership and the Obama administration over their handling of the speech. But that does not mean that Americans don't want to hear what the Israeli leader has to say. Perhaps both Congress and the administration should recognize that Netanyahu is a known entity to Americans, people understand his politics and his motivations, the success or failure of his speech will depend on its content, not on how leaders in Washington react.

Josh Rogin is a Bloomberg View columnist who writes about national security and foreign affairs.

Netanyahu siding with party US Jews don't back

By HAROLD MEYERSON

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is giving chutzpah a bad name.

Over the past several weeks, Netanyahu has aligned himself and his cause with the Republican Party, which an overwhelming majority of American Jews reject, and many are quick to despise; he has told European Jews to pull up stakes and come to Israel; and, according to a report just released by Israel's comptroller, he has spent large amounts of Israel's tax dollars (well, actually, shekels) on cleaning his private home (to the tune of \$2,000 a month) and his wife's makeup and hairstyling (\$68,000 over a two-year period).

Like every world leader and, for that matter, nearly everybody else, Netanyahu is fully aware that the fault lines in U.S. politics between Republicans and Democrats have widened to a chasm. Unlike every other world leader, the bumptious Bibi has decided to take a side in America's internal conflict by addressing a joint meeting of the Republican-controlled Congress (responding to an invitation from House Speaker John Boehner) without even informing President Barack Obama that he was Washington-bound. One of Netanyahu's goals is to undercut the administration's effort to negotiate a pact with Iran that will impede that nation's nuclear program. His other goal is clearly to stick it to Obama and thus appear to the Israeli electorate — which will go to the polls on March 17 — as one tough dude. If Netanyahu's talk, the idea for which was at least partly cooked up by Ron Dermer, a former GOP operative and now Israeli ambassador to the United States,

also has the effect of boosting the Republican Party at the expense of Obama and the Democrats, so much the better. During the 2012 election, Netanyahu did everything he could to make apparent that he preferred Mitt Romney to Obama, with no perceptible effect on the outcome or even on the voting preferences of American Jews, who backed Obama, 69 percent to 30 percent.

Of all the reasons that American Jews remain firmly Democratic, and liberal as well, the most fundamental is their commitment to particularism and universalism, to minority rights. For Jews in a majority-Christian country, the enshrinement of minority rights and its institutional guarantees — nondiscrimination in hiring and voting, say, or a judiciary independent of the elected branches of government — has always been paramount. It's why American Jews have embraced not only the battles for their own liberties but those of every other minority group.

Consider, for instance, the way most American Jews look at the two parties' stances in recent decades on immigration and civil rights. As Jews, as well as in 1994, when California voters approved a ballot measure, Proposition 187, that would have denied virtually all public services — including the right to attend K-12 schools — to undocumented immigrants, the state's most heavily Jewish neighborhoods, including West Los Angeles, voted overwhelmingly against it. (The measure was subsequently struck down by the courts.) Today, with Republicans bent on denying legal status to undocumented immigrants who've been here for decades, or who were brought here as children, or who came here fleeing horrific violence in their Central American homelands,

many Jews respond not just with sympathy but with empathy: Their grandparents or great-grandparents once came here, too, and many of them were fleeing the kind of violence that propelled more recent immigrants to cross the Rio Grande. Some of their grandparents also tried to come here after Hitler's rise to power, but our restrictive post-1924 immigration laws blocked their escape.

Some American Jews, to be sure, support the Republicans, but for most, to back a party so hostile to minority and immigrant rights is at best unnatural. It's not in their DNA. This egalitarianism also informs many American Jews' and American Zionists' support for a two-state solution establishing a Palestinian state that abuts Israel.

When American Jews — or anyone with eyes to see — look at Netanyahu and the Israeli right, they don't see a leader or movement with any such interest in a two-state solution or the minority rights that have been so fundamental to Jews in the diaspora. Many Israelis, in contrast to Bibi, have maintained that more egalitarian perspective despite living in a state where they constitute the majority. Many have not; the upcoming Israeli elections will at least partly measure the strengths of these two camps.

For now, Israel's prime minister is aligning himself with one of America's two camps. It's not the camp that commands — or even can command — the support of most American Jews. That will pose a problem for Israel.

Harold Meyerson is editor-at-large of The American Prospect. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Doctor won't care for lesbians' infant

MI OAK PARK — Two Detroit-area women say they believe a pediatrician refused to care for their infant daughter because they are lesbians and are disappointed that there is no state or federal law to prohibit such a decision.

Jami and Krista Contreras of Oak Park met with the doctor before the birth of their daughter, Bay Windsor, in October. But it wasn't until the girl was 6 days old and they were waiting at the practice for her first checkup that they learned of the pediatrician's decision.

Another doctor at the same practice told them their chosen pediatrician "prayed on it" before deciding not to see the child, Jami Contreras told WJBK-TV.

The couple said the doctor later wrote them a handwritten letter saying she felt she could not "develop the personal patient-doctor relationships" that she usually builds with patients.

70-mph speed limit on state highways OK'd

MD ANNAPOLIS — The Maryland Senate has voted to raise the speed limit from 65 to 70 mph on state highways. The Senate voted 39-7 for the measure on Thursday.

Senate approval marks a milestone for the bill, which passed the House of Delegates last year, but stalled in a Senate committee. A similar bill is pending in the House this year.

Opponents say it's dangerous. Sen. James Brochin, a Baltimore County Democrat, said raising the speed limit will cause some drivers to push it to 80 mph.

Rabbi pleads guilty to taping women at bath

DC WASHINGTON — A prominent Orthodox rabbi acknowledged Thursday that for years he videotaped women in a changing room at a Jewish ritual bath, ultimately recording approximately 150 nude women.

Barry Freundel pleaded guilty to 52 counts of voyeurism during a hearing at D.C. Superior Court. Each count is a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail. Freundel's attorney, Jeffrey Harris, acknowledged after the hearing that it was unlikely that his client would get a 52-year sentence but declined to say what sentence he would seek at a May 15 hearing.

Freundel, 63, was a rabbi at the Keshet Israel synagogue in Washington for more than 25 years before his arrest in October on voyeurism charges.

Coast Guard member accused of faked death

WV WHEELING — A West Virginia man has been charged with faking his death to desert from the U.S. Coast Guard.

U.S. Attorney William J. Ihlenfeld II said Larry C. Shelby, 33,

THE CENSUS

\$5.8K

The amount of cash an Arizona bank employee has been accused of stealing from a 79-year-old customer. Pima County sheriff's officials say Francisco Gamez-Hernandez, 25, a personal teller at a Wells Fargo branch in Green Valley, was arrested. According to the Sheriff's Department, Wells Fargo has reimbursed the victim's account.



PAUL KUEI, LAFAYETTE (LA), DAILY ADVERTISER/AP

Muddy merrymakers

Costumed participants splash in a mud puddle while awaiting the *Courir de Mardi Gras* in Mamou, La., on Tuesday. *Courir* participants travel through the town, begging homeowners for ingredients to create a large community gumbo, while chasing chickens as part of the holiday tradition.

of Martinsburg, abandoned his vehicle and wrote suicide notes in 2013. Shelby then concealed his identity and isolated himself in a remote cabin.

Ihlenfeld said Thursday that Shelby's wife, Karen Shelby, 33, and Jeffery John York, 32, of Martinsburg, conspired with the noncommissioned officer in the desertion plot. Karen Shelby and York are accused of telling authorities that Larry Selby was missing.

A federal grand jury indicted all three on hoax and conspiracy charges. Karen Selby and York also are each charged with making a false statement.

Ihlenfeld said the Coast Guard spent more than \$100,000 searching for Larry Selby.

High court overturns murder conviction

KY FRANKFORT — The Kentucky Supreme Court has overturned a murder and arson conviction because of a prosecutor's decision to remove so many women from the jury pool.

Chief Justice John D. Minton

Jr. said the defendant's claim of gender discrimination was "presented to him on a silver platter" by the prosecutor, who admitted to wanting to remove women from the jury pool.

Minton wrote for the unanimous court in Thursday's ruling. The high court reversed Cole Douglas Ross' murder and first-degree arson convictions and returned the case to Graves Circuit Court for further proceedings.

Ross was convicted of burning down a trailer in Melber, Ky., and killing Keith Colston.

Colston and his wife allowed Ross to move into their trailer after Ross lost his job. Investigators concluded Colston burned to death.

Coach charged with child porn, growing pot

NJ TRENTON — Authorities say a northern New Jersey high school wrestling coach and middle school gym teacher has been arrested and charged with possessing child pornography and running a marijuana-growing operation.

Acting Attorney General John

Hoffman said Thursday that Justin Bozinta, 37, of Roselle, was arrested Feb. 13 after investigators found that he had uploaded several images of child pornography to a social media account. Hoffman said that detectives found 40 marijuana plants in his home when they served a search warrant.

Bozinta is the wrestling coach at East Orange Campus High School and a middle school teacher at the Costley Middle School in East Orange.

Bozinta is at the Union County Jail on \$275,000 bail. He is charged with third-degree possession of child pornography and faces first-degree drug charges.

Long-lost clown from amusement park found

KS WICHITA — Louie the Clown, who went missing from a closed Wichita amusement park more than a decade ago, has been found at the home of a sex offender who used to work at the park.

The return of the mascot of the Joyland amusement park was such big news that it was re-

introduced during a media briefing Thursday.

Wichita police said officers found the clown Tuesday at a home of Damian Mayes, 39, who is serving a prison sentence for a 2010 conviction for aggravated indecent liberties with a child and aggravated criminal sodomy. Mayes used to build and repair organs at the park.

Louie disappeared from the Joyland property in 2005 or 2006 but wasn't reported stolen until 2010.

Police said that the nearly 50-year-old clown is worth \$10,000.



Authorities announced at a daily briefing the return of Joyland's organ-playing mascot Louie the Clown.

From wire reports

VIDEO GAMES



Photos courtesy of 2K Games

HUNTING THE RIGHT AND LOW

If you can find the right teammates, asymmetrical first-person shooter 'Evolve' delivers monster-fighting fun

By BRIAN BOWERS • Stars and Stripes



The planet Shear has a problem with enormous man-eating monsters — and it's your job to deal with it.

Luckily, you're not in this alone. You can bring three friends to help. Just remember to work together to avoid ending up as Kraken chow.

"Evolve" — developed by Turtle Rock Studios for 2K Games — pits four players acting as hunters against a fifth player who controls the monster. The resulting battles are intense and exhilarating.

That should be expected from Turtle Rock, the studio that also created the popular team-based zombie shooter "Left 4 Dead."

Both games feature four team members fighting a persistent foe, but the similarity pretty much ends there. "Left 4 Dead" offered interchangeable characters who fought hundreds of human-size enemies using familiar weapons.

"Evolve" offers something different in each of these aspects.

Each member of the monster-fighting squad in "Evolve" is unique. The assault character's primary job is to deal damage. The trapper is responsible for tracking the monster and setting traps. The medic heals. The support character can boost other players' performances by using various gadgets, and he can call on friends in orbit to deliver help, such as deadly barrages. Each hunter must play his or her role for the mission to be successful. If one player drops the ball or wanders off, all are likely to die.

Each of the hunter classes contains three characters. And each of these characters has a different set of weapons and abilities. For example, Maggie is a trapper who brings along a doglike critter to track the monster, while Griffin uses sound detectors to find the enemy. Val is a medic who carries a healing pistol, while Lazarus can revive dead. The different weapons, gadgets and abilities can make a surprising difference in the way combat unfolds, so it's wise to know each character's abilities and learn how they complement each other.

The same basic idea applies to monsters. You start with a Godzilla-like Goliath and can unlock the Kraken, which resembles a flying squid, and the Wrath, which has the ability to teleport as well as scythe-like talons.

The primary departure from "Left 4 Dead" is the asymmetrical game play in "Evolve." One vs. four competition is pretty rare, and some were skeptical about Turtle Rock's ability to pull it off. Developers spent a lot of time balancing the abilities of the hunters against the abilities of the monsters to ensure a level playing field. They claimed in the final beta test, the ratio of wins was split pretty evenly between the two sides.

Of course, a lot depends on the players' abilities. An experienced monster won't have much trouble gobbling up a pack of noobs who don't play as a team.

Overall grade: **B+**

However, things don't seem as balanced when you battle an opponent guided by the game's artificial intelligence. In solo games and online co-op, it can be difficult to defeat an AI opponent unless you have a great team — or tweak the settings in a custom match.

The most basic mission is the hunt. The hunters wander the environment searching for the monster while the monster tries to stay hidden until he can eat enough of the local fauna to evolve into a more robust beast. If the hunters can catch the monster while it's in the first stage of its evolution, they can defeat it without too much difficulty. A second-stage monster is a bit more difficult. A monster in the third, and final, stage can be very difficult to deal with because he has increased armor, health and attacks. He also can defeat the hunters by destroying their power station even if he doesn't kill them all.

In most missions, hunters run frantically around the map trying to find the monster before it evolves. It's also relatively common for an unfocused or inexperienced team of hunters to spend more than three-quarters of the match wandering the map in a fruitless search for their enemy. In these instances, the monster reaches stage 3 of its evolution and everyone highfights it to the power station for the first — and last — battle of the match. By this point, the monster is virtually unstoppable, and the results are usually predictable.

While individual hunting

matches are enjoyable, the most fun is to be found in the evacuation mode. This involves a sequence of five missions that lead to the evacuation of Shear's inhabitants.

Evacuation offers four types of missions: hunt, nest, rescue and defense. Nest missions place six monster eggs on the map. The monster tries to hatch the eggs while the hunters try to destroy the eggs and any hatchlings. In rescue missions, hunters must find scattered survivors and escort them to safety. In defense missions, players must hold off repeated attacks by the monster and its slightly smaller minions. Defense missions are the most exciting and challenging events in the game.

If you're uneasy about jumping right in, you can hone your skills in solo play. Each of the game modes is available. The only major difference is that you can switch among the characters.

Most of the game's technical aspects are very good. The graphics are usually excellent, though you'll occasionally see the remains of a monster's meal floating in mid-air. The controls are smooth and efficient. You can switch among weapons and gadgets, fight and maneuver with ease. And traversing the countryside is a breeze thanks to jetpacks that permit super long bounds and cliff-climbing.

The game earns its mature rating for violence and strong language.

Bottom line: B+ "Evolve" can deliver a tremendous amount of fun, but a lot depends on finding the right teammates.

Platforms: Xbox One, PlayStation 4, PC

Online: evolvegame.com

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LIFESTYLE

Love in a bottle

Woman carries on husband's intricate hobby after his death

By JESSICA MAHER
Centre Daily Times

Of the hundreds of unique “impossible bottles” her husband assembled over the years, Kathy Brown loves the one he gave her the best.

It's not only because she can still remember the day he surprised her with it — filled with items representing her Chinese heritage and their life together in State College, Pa. — or because after his death, she placed their wedding rings inside. And it's not just because the bottle's delicate, curved neck and shape show Chris Brown's high skill level at an extremely difficult hobby.

It's those reasons combined, and because the bottle is a precious example of Chris' unique brand of impossible bottles. It was the personal touch that Chris put in the bottles that made them so special, said Kathy, who authored “A Love Story of Impossible Bottles.” The book is dedicated to and inspired by her husband, who died in a parachuting accident in July 2012 at age 52.

“I really feel like these bottles symbolize the heart,” Kathy said. “Usually we don't let everything in, so when something is special, you want to capture it, and I think that is the whole idea.”

Anyone with patience (and lots of it) is capable of making what is known as an impossible bottle, which appears to defy logic by having objects inside that are clearly too large to fit through the bottleneck. The best-known impossible bottles are those with ships inside, but many other objects will work. Whether it's a book of matches, a deck of cards or a picture frame, it's a matter of deconstructing an item and then working painstakingly inside the bottle to put it back in its original form.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Chris Brown, pictured at right in blue shirt, made his wife, author Kathy Brown, pictured in red shirt, this impossible bottle to commemorate their love and filled it with items representing her Chinese heritage. She placed their wedding rings inside the bottle after his accidental death in 2012, and now carries on his hobby.

TNS



LIFESTYLE

FROM PAGE 16

Chris started making impossible bottles in the early 2000s, and it quickly became one of his many hobbies. His son, Scott Snyder, thinks it was a stress reliever for his dad, who loved anything with a challenge.

"He would just see things and be inspired," Snyder said in a phone interview from his home in Florida. "He wasn't into selling them and stuff and just wanted to give them to people as special gifts."

Chris and Kathy married in 2011, but they knew each other as co-workers at Penn State for more than a decade before that. Kathy remembers hearing that Chris made bottles, but she didn't realize the scope of the hobby or its significance until she saw for herself.

"To put a deck of cards in, that's really easy ... but it's the personal elements. You're trying to get as much as possible to capture that person's characteristics by how you design, by how you lay out," she said. "Sometimes it takes months or years to complete."

After his death, Kathy found some of Chris' works in progress, as well as the start of a book he'd always wanted to publish. Loose-leaf paper in a binder provided the bones for a "how-to" book, and there also were narratives that went along with bottles Chris had created for his grandfather and beloved dog.

"When he died, I knew I wanted to do something, and the first thing that came to mind was about his book," Kathy said.

But she wasn't quite sure how to tackle it and wanted to somehow take the book beyond a tutorial. The book was originally going to be called "Impossible Bottles," but a new title — and format — came to Kathy at the Hardcore Mudd Run (an obstacle course in mud) at Tussey Mountain ski area a few months after Chris' death.

Watching their family and friends run, climb and slither through a course that Chris had planned to participate in, Kathy said she could visualize the bottle she wanted to create to commemorate the event. She also pictured the story in the book that would go along with it, as well as others about family and love.

She spent the next 10 months writing "A Love Story of Impossible Bottles," which includes the how-to that Chris had started, paired with stories of favorite, special bottles.

"We all tried to figure out ways to handle the grief, and I think (the book) was a pretty awesome way to carry on his legacy and fulfill his dreams," Snyder said.

Kathy said she experienced a type of catharsis while writing the book and working on bottles using the techniques Chris had taught her.

"I even felt that Chris' spirit was with me, too," she said.

She remembers feeling his spirit with her one day in particular, when the Mudd Run bottle was not going the way she'd planned. She had the urge to throw it across the room before feeling what she can only describe as Chris intervening.

"I remember he said if you get frustrated, put it away, don't do anything or you'll regret it. I just felt the little jolt and then I put it away," Kathy said. "The next day I woke up with different ideas to continue the work and try different methods."

Kathy published "A Love Story of Impossible Bottles" in 2013, hitting her self-imposed deadline of releasing the book a year after Chris' death. She considers it a gift and permanent tribute to the love of her life; she released the second edition in November.

She continues to make impossible bottles, including completing some of those Chris never had the chance to.

"When I retired from the Air Force, Kathy finished a bottle that was one my dad had started for me," Snyder said. "That is one of my prized possessions."



NABIL K. MARK, CENTRE DAILY TIMES/TNS



TNS



Clockwise from top: Chris Brown poses with impossible bottles he made by hand, in 2002; Kathy Brown continues her late husband Chris' intricate hobby; an assortment of bottles made by the Browns; Kathy poses with bottles she made in memory of Chris.



TNS

HEALTH & FITNESS

Ideas for adopting a more plant-based diet **to your plate**

By MARY MACVEAN
Los Angeles Times

A man in the Los Angeles Times cafeteria the other day bought sliced turkey, white rice, a slice of white bread with butter and a Diet Coke. I realize it wasn't a vegan lunch, but it provides a lesson in how to create a healthy meal: color.

I spent the month of January on a vegan diet (I did eat a small piece of cheese without thinking while sitting and talking with friends — an example of mindless eating that could be fodder for a different story), and I learned a lot from experimenting, from readers' suggestions and from books.

Foremost among the lessons is that a vegan diet is not necessarily a healthful diet. You can replace animal products with chemicals, and bagels, French fries, white rice, candy and sodas can be vegan. Not exactly what the doctor ordered for a long and happy life. And again, a pretty colorful diet.

Although many people choose to eat a vegan diet for their health, more do it for reasons having to do with the environment and animal rights, according to surveys. Those folks were my cheerleaders all month.

Here are a few ideas for adopting a more plant-based diet for 2015 and beyond:

Color. Make sure the food on your plate is full of it. Fruits and vegetables make that easy. We're told by the U.S. government that we need at least five servings a day. Fewer than 20 percent of Americans consume that, and many nutritionists say five is not enough.

Plan, even a little. Sharon Palmer, author of "The Plant-Powered Diet" and "Plant-Powered for Life," says it can be difficult to maintain a vegan diet while traveling, especially in places where you don't speak the language. Be nice, she says. Look at websites that list vegan-friendly spots, such as happycow.net. Consider relaxing your standards once in a while. In unfamiliar territory, it might be tough to verify that a dish is free of cheese or fish sauce. "There's no vegan police," Palmer says. "It's a person-to-person choice."

Cook. I'm grateful that I know how to cook and that fresh produce, available year-round in southern California, makes just about any diet easy. Bring a vegan dish when you're invited to dinner to ease any discomfort for the host.

Protein, B-12, vitamin D.

Vegans who want cheese have a friend in Vromage

By MARY MACVEAN
Los Angeles Times

The line one recent Sunday was out the door at Vromage (vromage.com), a 3-month-old shop selling cheese made from nut milks.

"People are very emotional when they come," said owner Youssef Fakhouri, who was raised in Casablanca and Paris and trained as a chef.

Customers who don't eat food made with the milk of animals for ethical reasons or because of allergies tell him they thought they were done with artisan cheeses. At his little shop, in a cramped strip mall at 7985 Sunset Blvd., near La Cienega, they find nut milk versions of goat cheese logs (Vive le Difference) with ash, blue cheese (Veganzola), Camembert (Cashembert) — 17 varieties in total.

"The inspiration is from friends who are vegan," Fakhouri said. "Everyone was complaining about nondairy cheese."

Fakhouri took on the challenge. He started experimenting with pine nuts, pistachios and macadamias. He makes milk from the nuts and then uses traditional cheese-

making techniques, straining the whey, adding truffles or herbs, and pressing the curds into forms.

Just as dairy cheese

makers say each wheel may taste different based on where and what the animals ate, Fakhouri says his cheeses taste of where and how the nuts were grown. "That's the beauty of it," he said.

Consumers should taste the product for itself rather than compare it to an animal cheese, he said. "I am not trying to make it indistinguishable from the animal counterpart."

With that, the cheeses taste quite good. A macadamia, cashew and pine nut Brie, served on a baguette from the restaurant Republique, which Fakhouri stocks, was more than satisfying. Customers apparently agree: On that Sunday, the refrigerator case was almost empty before 1 p.m. The cheeses cost \$2.40 to \$3 an ounce; there are usually eight varieties available.

Tofu, nuts, beans, meat substitutes and even vegetables are easy sources of protein. But many people, no matter their diets, are short of vitamin D, which generally comes from the sun and from fortified foods, and of vitamin B-12, which we mainly get from meat. Palmer says it can be worthwhile to take supplements.

Doing without. Consider changing one thing a week — maybe try brown rice and tofu for breakfast rather than a bacon sandwich.

Most of us can benefit from eating fewer animal products. For me, eggs and ice cream were what I missed most.

I can happily live without cold cuts, and I'm ready to give up beef. All that puts it squarely in the "red-duce-itarian" camp (reducetarian.com) — an initiative to get people to eat fewer animal products.

Experiment. Buy, or grow, new fruits and vegetables. I also was pleasantly surprised by some things we tasted, including Beyond Meat's grilled "chicken," Tofurky's hot dogs and several veggie burgers. My family loved the food at restaurants we tried, including the Brussels sprouts ever at Mohawk Bend in Echo Park, Calif.

A step further. If vegan isn't enough, there's always a raw vegan diet. A reader, Thomas Leeman, says he was heavy as a young adult but lost weight when he adopted a raw diet of vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes. His cholesterol fell from 240 to 180, he says. "Now I eat as large a portion as I want, never thinking about quantity or calories," he wrote in an email.

Weight. Ah, yes. The most frequent question, from friends and strangers alike, was whether I lost any. I don't own a scale, but I can say I absolutely lost the not-insignificant weight I gained over the holidays. Beyond that, I don't know.

What I can say, however, is that I can see a vegan January in 2016.

Youssef Fakhouri offers 17 types of vegan cheese at his Los Angeles shop Vromage. The dairy-free cheeses are made from a variety of nuts, including pistachios and cashews, and olive oil.

PHOTOS BY ANNE CUSACK, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS



MUSIC

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?



Mystery surrounding George Ezra and other foreign singers fuels buzz

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

The music video for George Ezra's song "Budapest" opens on an overhead shot of a group of people standing in a dimly lit space. Most of them are facing the same direction, as though they're watching somebody perform. Because this is his video, your first assumption is that that somebody will turn out to be George Ezra.

Nope.

Twelve seconds into the clip, which has racked up more than 31 million views on YouTube, a guy in the middle of the crowd starts singing as the music settles into a tidy retro-folk-rock groove.

The guy of course is Ezra, a 21-year-old English singer whose debut album, "Wanted on Voyage," was the third-biggest seller in the U.K. last year. (It was released in the U.S. on Jan. 27) Later we see him in a series of more traditional glamour shots, his dreamy eyes beaming sincerity.

But the memorable thing about the "Budapest" video is that — for a while, at least — it's not fulfilling the mission of most music videos, which is to help construct a cult of personality. If you watch without knowing what Ezra looks like, you might expect just about any face in the crowd to burst into song.

Even if you've heard "Budapest," chances are good you don't yet know what Ezra looks like. The singer is one of several emerging artists connecting with a wider audience not through the allure of celebrity but through their music — a maverick approach at a moment when pop, as ruled by media-savvy glamazon stars like Beyoncé and Katy Perry, is more image-driven than ever.

What's more, these slightly mysterious figures are doing it with songs whose grizzled vocals and roughed-up arrangements imply dramatic back stories that the artists themselves

are largely withholding, and which fans appear equally uninterested in establishing for them.

Is that simply a matter of time as audience interest reaches a critical mass? Or an indicator of an ineffective public-relations apparatus? Perhaps. But I think this obscurity is more strategic, a means of inviting listeners to insert themselves into the music.

In addition to Ezra, there's Hozier, the young Irish singer-songwriter with the Grammy-nominated, top-five hit "Take Me to Church." The song goes straight for the big subjects — sex, death and religion — with a boldness we typically associate with veterans like Bob Dylan or Bruce Springsteen.

"I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies," Hozier yowls over a booming blues-soul beat, his voice bleeding desperation (and desire). With Dylan or Springsteen, you hear those heavy words and you instinctively work to attach them to names and places in each man's real life.

In the case of Hozier, who doesn't even appear in his video for "Take Me to Church," we know none of the names or places; the music seems to be drawing on a history it's in the process of creating.

The same goes for "Riptide" by the Australian singer Vance Joy, a scrappy acoustic ditty that's been streamed more than 180 million times on Spotify even though many listeners probably couldn't identify Vance Joy in a lineup — especially if the lineup also included the scrappy Northern Irish balladeer Foy Vance.

These are hardly the first foreigners to find success selling American roots music to Americans. That's a tradition that dates to the Beatles and runs up through Amy Winehouse, Mumford & Sons and, most recently, Sam Smith, the British soul singer who took home four Grammys — including biggie best new artist, record of the year and song of the year.

Each of those acts had a kind of narrative that helped secure their passage with U.S. audiences, be it the rowdy Winehouse's appetite for trouble or the lovelorn Smith's story about never having been in a long-term relationship. For these artists, their songs were (or are) elaborating on already-established notions, whereas with the newer acts, there's nothing substantial to hold onto beyond the songs.

Assuming Hozier's fame continues to grow, will we have as clear a picture of him in two years as we have now of, say, Adele? It's possible, sure.

But look at the cover of Hozier's self-titled debut, which depicts a long-haired man in a denim shirt, presumably the singer, with his face cut out. Ditto the cover of "Wanted on Voyage," where Ezra repeats the image from the "Budapest" video: a regular guy in a crowd of people, just like you and me.

By staying relatively anonymous, these artists are short-circuiting our tendency to interpret songs as diary entries by their superstar writers, to look for evidence — the way we do in Taylor Swift, for example — of what she's thinking or feeling offstage. That clears space for us to map our experiences onto tunes such as "Budapest" and "Take Me to Church" — perfect for the age of social media, where we're all the heroes of our own Instagram videos in need of a soundtrack.

GEORGE EZRA PHOTO BY CLEMENT PASCAL/Courtesy of Columbia Records



George Ezra

Wanted on Voyage (Columbia)

Don't let George Ezra's baby-faced good looks fool you. The 21-year-old British phenom with the booming bass-baritone voice is definitely an adult artist.

Ezra's debut, "Wanted on Voyage," which already topped the British charts, takes on a wide variety of adult styles with his surprising voice. Sometimes, he's channeling Mumford & Sons folk in his single "Budapest," where he bounces between his lower register and his falsetto to show off his contemporary, playful side. Sometimes, he's grooving along to '80s new wave, with the dancey "Stand By Your Gun," where his deep, distinctive voice plays off the plinky synths nicely.

Ezra's style is hard to define, with a far more complicated lineage than Grammy darling Sam Smith or chart-topper Ed Sheeran. However, it's easy to recognize. The first half of the wild blues spiritual "Did You Hear the Rain," sung mainly at the bottom of his register in a thunderous style that rattles with its lengthy notes, could have come from the 1960s — or even the 1860s — before it shifts into a more contemporary sound. On the simple "Listen to the Man," it sounds like he's brought back an Elvis Presley classic.

As fascinating as Ezra's shifting musical styles are to roll through, his detailed lyrics are even more rewarding. "You said you needed a haircut, I recommended Mr. Todd," he snipes in "Drawing Board," referring to the murderous fictional barber Sweeney Todd. While lines like "I've been told your new playmate's successful and he's handsome and he's charming, it's a damn good job he isn't here or I may have wound up harming your darling" from "Leaving It Up to You" have a touch of Morrissey-esque drama, Ezra's pain sounds genuine rather than affected.

It's that combination that will make Ezra one of this year's most talked-about new stars.

— Glenn Gamboa

Newsday

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Experts: Wal-Mart raises not enough

By Josh Boak
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For roughly 500,000 Wal-Mart workers set to receive pay raises, something is better than nothing.

But it still won't be enough for many of them to afford housing and transportation and to feed and raise children without government aid, according to economists and researchers.

The nation's largest private employer — with 1.3 million jobs — unveiled a salary bump for many of its lowest-paid workers on Thursday, promising a 1.1 percent increase in the average full-time wage during the next year, to \$13 per hour. Part-time workers would get a 5.2 percent raise, to an average \$10 per hour, by February 2016.

Both fall below the \$15 per hour "living wage" many union-backed Wal-Mart employees have been pushing for. Driven by rising income inequality and a decades-long decline in middle-class jobs,

workers are also campaigning for steep wage hikes at other major non-unionized employers, including McDonalds and other fast food chains.

Despite the raise, incomes for many Wal-Mart workers would still hover near the poverty line, reinforcing an image that some more socially minded consumers find offensive.

"I will return to Wal-Mart when I know that they pay well enough to create a situation where that ladder of opportunity starts at an appropriate place, for their first job or near retirement. That's got to be achievable but the other rungs have to be clear enough so they know how to climb up," he said.

The announcement was clearly a recognition that workers across the retail economy are finding fewer ladder rungs to climb. In many cases, people are staying at entry-level jobs for their entire careers, stagnating their incomes and limiting their ability to spend at stores such as Wal-Mart.

Bill Simon, a former senior Wal-Mart executive, acknowledged as much to The Associated Press for a story published last year, when he said that many of the superearner retailer's employees would be better off seeking higher-paying jobs elsewhere.

"The point is broader than just

a starting wage rate," Wal-Mart CEO Doug McMillon told The Associated Press in an interview this week at the company headquarters in Bentonville, Ark.

"We have to create a situation where that ladder of opportunity starts at an appropriate place, for their first job or near retirement. That's got to be achievable but the other rungs have to be clear enough so they know how to climb up," he said.

The announcement was clearly a recognition that workers across the retail economy are finding fewer ladder rungs to climb. In many cases, people are staying at entry-level jobs for their entire careers, stagnating their incomes and limiting their ability to spend at stores such as Wal-Mart.

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Still, the impact of the pay raise will depend on where Wal-Mart workers live.

In Fayetteville, Ark. — near the company headquarters — a single parent of one child would need to earn \$16.85 per hour, almost \$4 per hour more than Wal-Mart's pay raise for full-time workers, according to a living wage calculator created by Amy Glasmeier, a professor of economic geography at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 19, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	-44.08
	17,985.77
Nasdaq composite	+18.34
	4,924.70
Standard & Poor's 500	-2.23
	2,097.45
Russell 2000	-0.04
	1,227.91

EXCHANGE RATES

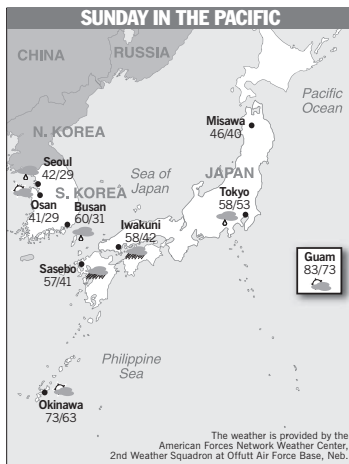
Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 23)	\$1.1623
Dollar buys (Feb. 23)	\$0.8604
British pound (Feb. 23)	\$1.58
Japanese yen (Feb. 23)	\$116.00
South Korean won (Feb. 23)	1,073.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5354/0.6513
Canada (dollar)	1.2563
China (Yuan)	6.2564
Denmark (Krone)	6.6689
Egypt (Pound)	7.6306
Hong Kong (Dollar)	1.7577
Euro (Euro)	0.7150
India (Rupee)	1.2873
Japan (Yen)	118.33
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2957
Norway (Krone)	7.6018
Philippines (Peso)	44.24
Poland (Zloty)	3.70
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7528
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3596
South Korea (Won)	1,110.20
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9460
Thailand (Baht)	32.56
Turkey (New Lira)	2.4648

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., currencies of other countries), rates are provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
3-month bill	0.12
3-month bond	0.02
30-year bond	2.74

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Saturday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Able, Tex	63	36	Pdly	Chatanooga	46	42	Cldy	Fort Wayne	32	19	Snow	Louisville	37	28	Snow
Akron, Ohio	30	20	Snow	Cheyenne	26	1	Cldy	Fresno	66	45	Cir	Lubbock	58	31	Pdly
Albany, N.Y.	27	25	Snow	Chicago	30	10	Snow	Goodland	37	13	Snow	Macon	62	49	Cir
Albuquerque	63	38	Pdly	Cincinnati	37	26	Snow	Grand Junction	45	24	Cldy	Madison	26	3	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	30	30	Snow	Cleveland	31	18	Snow	Green Bay	23	0	Cldy	Medford	57	33	Pdly
Anchorage	40	33	Rain	Colorado Springs	33	11	Snow	Greensboro, N.C.	35	34	Cldy	Memphis	60	31	Rain
Asheville	38	38	Snow	Columbia, S.C.	61	49	Cldy	Hartford	29	27	Snow	Midland-Odessa	67	37	Pdly
Atlanta	53	48	Cldy	Columbus, Ohio	37	26	Snow	Harrisburg	29	27	Snow	Minneapolis	28	8	Cldy
Atlantic City	39	39	Snow	Concord, N.H.	26	26	Snow	Hartford Spfld	30	4	Snow	Milwaukee	28	8	Cldy
Bakersfield	51	30	Snow	Corpus Christi	77	63	Cldy	Helena	30	4	Snow	Missoula	30	5	Cir
Baltimore	31	30	Snow	Dallas-Ft. Worth	68	59	Cldy	Honolulu	75	69	Cldy	Montgomery	66	56	Cldy
Baton Rouge	74	58	Cldy	Dayton	35	23	Snow	Houston	77	59	Cldy	Nashville	46	29	Rain
Bilings	25	5	Snow	Daytona Beach	72	57	Pdly	Huntsville	52	41	Rain	New Orleans	75	60	Cldy
Birmingham	60	48	Cldy	Denver	28	13	Snow	Indianapolis	34	21	Snow	Paderborn	40	25	Rain
Blacksburg	9	-13	Cir	Des Moines	29	3	Snow	Jackson, Miss.	67	48	Rain	San Jose	31	30	Snow
Boise	48	29	Cldy	Detroit	29	18	Snow	Jacksonville	69	50	Pdly	St. Louis	30	30	Snow
Boston	29	29	Snow	Duluth	14	-18	Snow	Juneau	43	35	Pdly	St. Paul	44	42	Cldy
Bridgeport	31	30	Snow	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Kansas City	32	11	Cldy	St. Peter	44	42	Cldy
Brownsville	79	66	Cir	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Knoxville	47	39	Cldy	San Diego	78	54	Cldy
Buffalo	27	23	Snow	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Lake Charles	73	59	Cldy	San Francisco	66	49	Cir
Burlington, Vt.	24	22	Snow	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Lansing	71	51	Pdly	Seattle	57	27	Cldy
Caribou, Maine	24	1	Cldy	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Las Vegas	71	51	Pdly	St. Mary	57	27	Cldy
Charleston	57	50	Cldy	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Lexington	37	29	Snow	St. Paul	57	27	Cldy
Charleston, S.C.	57	50	Cldy	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Lincoln	33	8	Snow	St. Thomas	59	50	Snow
Charleston, W.Va.	38	35	Snow	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Little Rock	54	34	Snow	St. Vincent	45	36	Pdly
Charlotte, N.C.	39	38	Cldy	El Paso	75	50	Cir	Los Angeles	68	57	Cldy	Shreveport	74	44	Cldy

National temperature extremes

Hi: Thu., 86, Imperial, Calif. and Palm Springs, Calif.	
Lo: Thu., -42, Cotton, Minn.	



VIETNAM

AT

50



Explore **STARS AND STRIPES**® new feature section: Vietnam at 50.

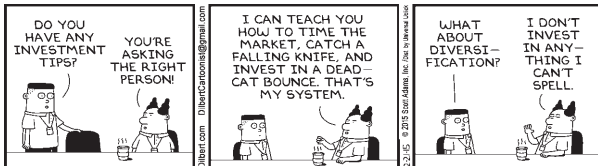
With contributions from the men and women who were there, as well as voices from experts and our readers, we take a look back at the Vietnam War and the cultural changes that surrounded it. How the war was prosecuted, how it changed our military and foreign policy thinking, and how America viewed itself then and now. It's a radically new design for Stars and Stripes, and one you can help shape by sharing your thoughts and voices.

Visit online for more content and video—or to share your memories: stripes.com/vietnam50

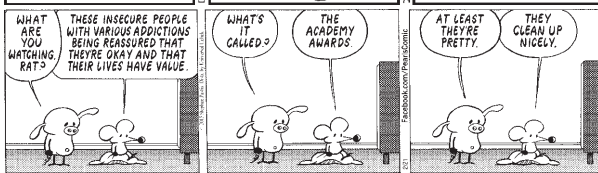
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



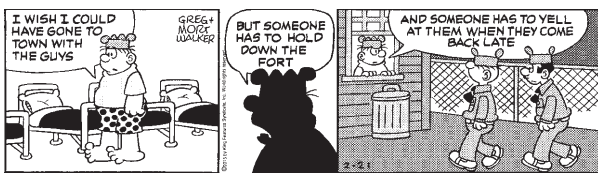
Candorville



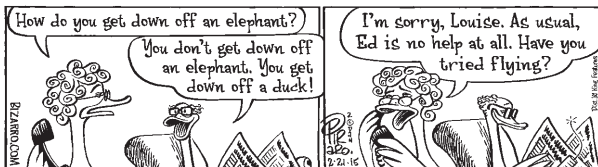
Get Fuzzy



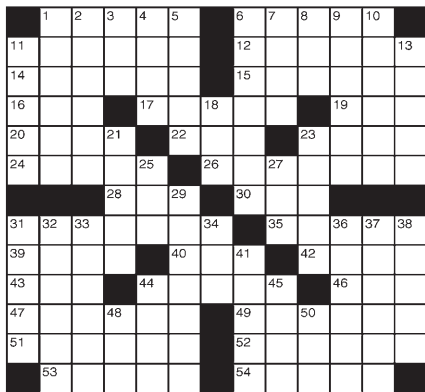
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



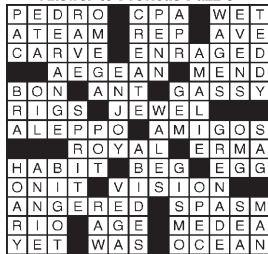
ACROSS

- 1 Waterfall features
- 6 Safari master
- 11 Little finger
- 12 Go to a restaurant
- 14 Counsel
- 15 Esteem
- 16 Retirement plan acronym
- 17 Money of Denmark
- 19 Junior
- 20 Faction
- 22 Long lunch
- 23 Long lunch
- 24 As cross as —
- 26 Fast time
- 28 Gloomy fellow?
- 30 Understood
- 31 Lack
- 35 Roost
- 39 Astigmatism factor
- 40 Scale members
- 42 Place to get
- 22-Across
- 43 Prohibit
- 44 City of India
- 46 Jam ingredient?
- 47 Stick
- 49 Pop-up producer
- 51 Tar
- 52 Followed closely as a dog

DOWN

- 3 Moviegoers' mementos
- 54 Refine rock
- 25 Skedaddle
- 27 Broom closet item
- 29 Fly catchers?
- 31 Ararat's successor
- 32 Lawn components
- 33 Broad-brimmed beachwear
- 34 Slithery swimmer
- 36 Bad news in the car industry
- 37 Red Bordeaux
- 38 On the payroll
- 41 Persian cats?
- 44 Colorless
- 45 Bibliography word
- 48 Blue — (muscle cream brand)
- 50 Teensy

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-21

CRYPTOQUIP

OD UNN YBQ DGNSF GP QUZYB

BVIJNW FVJIOYYQT YG QUAB

GYBQZ, OY HGVNT IUSQ U

HGZNT GD TQDQZQPAQ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU OPT TO USE A CERTAIN FRAGRANT SPICE IN COOKING A MEAL, MAKE SURE YOU ADD IT GINGERLY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals I

Schild.

NFL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Mariota featured attraction at combine

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Marcus Mariota looked comfortable on center stage Thursday.

He had the deliberate walk, the calm demeanor and the perfect answers. All the Oregon quarterback has to do now is prove he can thrive in the NFL.

The reigning Heisman Trophy winner spent roughly 15 minutes answering questions Thursday at the NFL's annual scouting, using a no-frills approach to show why he should be the No. 1 pick in the draft.

"As a competitor, any person would tell you that they're the best," Mariota said. "I truly believe that in myself. We'll see whatever decision is made. I've got to go in with that mentality."

His sterling résumé is not the issue.

Mariota threw for 4,454 yards with 42 touchdowns and had four interceptions in 2014, leading Oregon to the national championship game. He won the Heisman Trophy, was voted The Associated Press and Walter Camp player of the year and took home the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award, the Maxwell Award and the Dave O'Brien Award.

In December, he earned his college degree from Oregon. Add a virtually spotless background check and it appears Mariota is the right fit as a franchise quarterback.

But there are concerns about how well quarterbacks in spread offenses fare when they move to the NFL. When asked about reading more complex defenses and the perception that he can't make NFL throws, Mariota responded by simply saying that's somebody's opinion.

Those who really have ques-



DAVID J. PHILLIPS/AP

Oregon quarterback Marcus Mariota makes his way to the interview room for a news conference at the NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis on Thursday.

tions could get an up-close look Saturday when Mariota intends to throw during quarterback workouts at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Of course, even Mariota acknowledges things will be different in the NFL.

"I haven't huddled in a while," he said. "It seems like a little detail, but that is kind of a big thing. There are other things as well: Three, five, seven-step drops under center. That's all stuff I've been able to work on the last month."

Mariota was supposed to share the big stage Thursday with Jameis Winston.

Instead, because of a longer-than-anticipated medical exam, Winston's appearance was delayed until Friday. That's when the 2013 Heisman winner from Florida State is expected to take questions.

In previous years, some of the top college quarterbacks tried to put a personal spin on the combine.

Robert Griffin III wore Super-

man socks, Tim Tebow embraced the attention about his faith and 2012 Heisman winner Johnny Manziel even tried to change his playful public image by taking a more business-like approach.

Mariota, in contrast, played it safe with short answers that reinforced his commitment to the sport without raising any potential red flags among his future employer. Even the right shoulder he hurt in the national championship loss to Ohio State is healed.

"There's a purpose for why

I'm here and why I'm standing in front of you and that's because I love the game, I want to be part of this game, I want to be part of this game for a long time," Mariota said. "My motivation isn't to prove anybody wrong. My motivation is to make a dream come true."

The other prospects are following the situation, too.

Even Baylor's Bryce Petty, who has been working out in San Diego with the two best-known quarterbacks in the draft, weighed in.

"The coolest thing about Jameis that a lot of people don't understand is his ability to compartmentalize things," said Petty, who comes from a similar offensive style as Mariota. "He (Winston) is a great person and a guy that loves football, and I've had a blast working with him."

All eyes Friday will be on Winston, and the scouts will be watching closely Saturday — if he works out.

But the other 13 quarterbacks in Indianapolis aren't conceding anything to the guys who could go 1-2 in the draft.

"My goal is to be No. 1," UCLA's Brett Hundley said. "Mariota is very athletic, Jameis is a great quarterback. They both have a Heisman under their name. I personally know them very well, but we all have our unique abilities and I think that's where you separate elite quarterbacks."

For Mariota, it's not about being a star at the NFL's biggest offseason attraction.

It's all about being successful, his way.

"I don't really compare myself to other players," he said. "You really limit yourself if you compare yourself to others, that's something I was taught at a young age. For me, I just really focus on myself and make sure I can be the best player I can be."

Briefly

Giants' Bochy 'doing great' after heart procedure

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — San Francisco Giants manager Bruce Bochy is "doing great" and is expected to be released from the hospital Friday, a day after a heart procedure to insert two stents.

Brett Bochy, a pitcher with the team at spring training, said he visited his 59-year-old father at Scottsdale Healthcare Medical Center on Thursday and Friday before going to the clubhouse. The hospital is across the street from where the Giants work out.

"He's doing great," Brett Bochy said. "It's a little scary to go to the hospital, but he's in good hands. They noticed something after his physical early so it was caught early, and he's feeling great now."

Bochy, who turns 60 in April, has led the Giants to three World Series titles in the past five seasons — 2010, 2012 and last year.

In other MLB news:

■ Rangers' second baseman Jurickson Profar could miss his second straight season to have right shoulder surgery, which he had tried to avoid through rest and rehabilitation.

Texas general manager Jon Daniels said Thursday that doctors recommended surgery in September, when Profar was told to stop playing for the third time since he aggravated a 2010 injury during spring training last year.

Heat: Bosh undergoing more tests at hospital

NEW YORK — Chris Bosh of the Miami Heat was undergoing more tests on Friday, amid concerns that he has a blood clot on one of his lungs.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra told reporters in New York that "it's too early for an ultimate diagno-

sis," Spoelstra says the team will have more information either later Friday or sometime Saturday.

Bosh has been dealing with side and back pain for several days. He went to a Miami-area hospital on Thursday for evaluation, and Spoelstra says the All-Star forward "is in great care and good spirits."

Miami is playing at New York on Friday night, though that almost seemed secondary amid worries about Bosh's condition.

Florida awaiting NCAA infractions report

The NCAA is expected to release its findings Friday of an infractions investigation believed to involve former wide receivers coach Joker Phillips.

The NCAA said it would disclose its report Friday afternoon.

Florida released a brief statement, which made it fairly clear that the investigation involves Phillips, who abruptly resigned last June citing personal reasons. The school said it would be the "final resolution to a matter that we dealt with last June regarding one of our former assistant football coaches."

Phillips has since become the receivers coach for the NFL's Cleveland Browns, meaning any NCAA infractions would have little effect on him.

Veteran accuses Auburn players of harassment

AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn coach Gus Malzahn has apologized for the behavior of two players who allegedly harassed a military veteran and her service dog as she walked to class.

Shari Duval, president of K9s for Warriors, said Thursday that Malzahn called the Air Force veteran after the incident on Tuesday. The woman, 25-year-old Ashley Ozyurt, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. Duval said she has not returned to class.

Duval said the players, whose names have not been released, used profanity toward the veteran.

"Why they did that, I have no idea," Duval said. "I guess they thought it was a good idea at the time, but it was not a good idea."

Duval said Malzahn indicated the players would apologize. She said Ozyurt is "a little reluctant to accept the apologies of the players because they continue to Tweet about it."

Duval said her group is working on bringing together an awareness program with Auburn on disabled veterans and service dogs.

NHL



KATHY WILLENS/AP

Nashville center Mike Fisher, center, defends as Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne, right, makes a save with New York Rangers left wing Nikolay Kulemin in front of the crease during the third period of Thursday's game at Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y. The Islanders won the game 5-2.

Roundup

Islanders end Predators' six-game winning streak

The Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — The New York Islanders didn't let the NHL-leading Nashville Predators push them around in their last visit to Long Island.

The last one in the regular season, at least.

No, the Predators won't be back at Nassau Coliseum again unless these surprising upstart clubs march their way to a Stanley Cup finals matchup. As far-fetched as that might have seemed in October, it is hardly out of the question now.

Nick Leddy had a goal and two assists, Jaroslav Halak tied the team record for wins in a season, and the Islanders cooled off the Predators with a 5-2 win on Thursday night.

Brian Strait, John Tavares and Johnny Boychuk scored in the first period for the Islanders, who snapped Nashville's six-game winning streak with their sixth victory in seven games. Tavares has at least one goal in four straight games.

No thoughts yet of the finals, though.

"We know we have a good hockey team, and we believe we can beat any team in this league, and we expect to," Tavares said. "We have so many games, and we are so in the moment of still trying to get to the playoffs. It's important we focus on the here and now."

"If we eventually get to that point, it would be a heck of an opportunity."

The Islanders (39-19-1) lead the Metropolitan Division and are one point behind Eastern Conference-leading Montreal.

Leddy and Josh Bailey scored 1:39 apart in the third period to break open a one-goal nail biter. Halak made 30 saves.

"We beat a good team," Halak said. "They are the No. 1 team in the whole NHL the whole season. Beating them is always nice, and getting two points is more important right now."

Blue Jackets 2, Penguins 1 — Brandon Dubinsky poked a pass from Matt Calvert past a sprawled Marc-Andre Fleury with 2:17 remaining, sending Columbus to the road win.

Pittsburgh's Blake Comstock turned it over and the Blue Jackets quickly pounced. Calvert fed Dubinsky as Pittsburgh's Steve Downie ran over Fleury. Dubinsky had little trouble tapping in his seventh goal of the season.

Stars 5, Stars 2 — Andrew Desjardins scored two second-period goals, and visiting San Jose held on for the win.

Antti Niemi made 37 saves for the Sharks, who had lost two straight. The victory vaulted them into a tie for seventh place in the Western Conference with Calgary, tied for third in the Pacific Division.

Capitals 5, Jets 1 — Nicklas Backstrom scored two second-period goals and had an assist, and host Washington won for the fourth time in five games.

Capitals star Alex Ovechkin added his league-leading 38th goal and an assist. Troy Brouwer had an empty-net goal and an assist, and John Carlson also scored.

Canucks 5, Rangers 4 (SO) — Alexandre Burrows and Radim Vrbata scored in the shootout, and visiting Vancouver stopped New York's four-game winning streak.

Henrik Sedin scored twice for the Canucks, including a tying tally on a rebound with 2:00 left in regulation after Vancouver pulled goaltender Ryan Miller.

Panthers 3, Canadiens 2 (SO) — Dave Bolland scored in the sixth round of the shootout, lifting Florida to the road victory.

Tomas Fleischmann and Steven Kampfer scored in regulation for the Panthers (26-19-12), who won their second game in a row to start a five-game trip.

Sabres 3, Flyers 2 (SO) — Brian Flynn scored the clinching goal in the shootout, leading visiting Buffalo to a rare win.

Nicolas Deslauriers and Brian Gionta scored in regulation for Buffalo, which won for just the fourth time in the last 27 games. The Sabres improved to 7-2 in shootouts.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	58	37	16	5	79	154	130
Tampa Bay	60	36	18	6	78	195	160
Detroit	56	32	14	10	74	163	143
Boston	57	28	20	9	65	150	149
Florida	57	26	19	12	64	141	157
Ottawa	56	23	23	10	56	159	160
Toronto	58	23	30	5	51	162	178
Buffalo	58	17	37	4	38	108	197

Metropolitan Division							
N.Y. Islanders	59	39	19	1	79	193	165
N.Y. Rangers	56	34	16	6	74	178	141
Washington	59	32	17	10	74	176	147
Pittsburgh	58	32	17	9	73	163	146
Philadelphia	58	24	23	11	59	155	170
Columbus	56	26	27	3	55	149	173
New Jersey	57	22	26	9	53	126	155
Carolina	56	20	29	7	47	127	154

Western Conference

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	58	39	13	6	84	177	137
St. Louis	57	37	16	4	78	179	141
Chicago	58	35	18	5	75	174	134
Winnipeg	60	30	20	10	70	166	162
Minnesota	57	29	21	7	65	158	154
Dallas	58	27	23	8	62	181	185

Colorado	58	24	23	11	59	150	165
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	58	35	16	7	77	170	164
Vancouver	57	33	21	3	69	163	151
Calgary	58	32	22	4	68	168	150
San Jose	60	30	22	8	68	170	172
Los Angeles	57	27	18	12	66	159	151
Arizona	58	20	31	7	47	131	194
Edmonton	59	17	32	10	44	139	199

Note: Two points for a win, one point for a tie.

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Thursday's games
Vancouver at N.Y. Rangers 4, 50
Buffalo 3, Philadelphia 2, 50
Florida 3, Montreal 2, 50
N.Y. Islanders 5, Nashville 2
Columbus 2, Pittsburgh 1
Washington 5, Winnipeg 1
San Jose 5, Dallas 2

Friday's games
Vancouver at New Jersey
Toronto at Carolina
N.Y. Rangers at Buffalo
Boston at St. Louis
Colorado at Chicago
Anaheim at Calgary
Minnesota at Edmonton

Saturday's games
N.Y. Islanders at Washington
Nashville at Philadelphia
Winnipeg at Toronto
Columbus at Montreal
Florida at Ottawa
Carolina at New Jersey
Anaheim at Edmonton
Pittsburgh at St. Louis
Detroit at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Arizona
Los Angeles vs. San Jose at Santa Clara, Calif.

Sunday's games
Washington at Philadelphia
Boston at Chicago
Nashville at Buffalo
Vancouver at N.Y. Islanders
Buffalo at Tampa Bay at Colorado
Columbus at Rangers
Vegas at Minnesota

Thursday

Panthers 3, Canadiens 2 (SO)

Florida	0	1	0	3
Montreal	0	2	0	2

First Period—1, Montreal, Gallagher 14 (Pacioretty, Desharnais), 2:31. 2, Montreal, Poirier 15 (Gubman), 10:32. 3, Florida, Fleischmann 7 (Huberdeau), 18:01.

Third Period—4, Florida, Kamper 1 (Fleischmann, Upshall), 4:57.
Shootout—Florida 2 (Huberdeau NG, Boyes NG, Blugstad G, Jokinen NG, Barre, Solli, Poirier 15, Gubman), 2-1 (Desharnais NG, Pacioretty G, Gallagher NG, Subban).

Shots on Goal—Florida 6-7-6-2-21. Montreal 11-16-11-11-39.

Third Period—5, Vancouver, Stepan 11 (St. Louis, Girardi), 1:13. 2, Vancouver, Mathias 14 (Hansen, Kenins), 1:43. 3, N.Y. Rangers, Solli 36 (Brassard, Zuccarello), 11:00. 4, Vancouver, Horvat 8 (Kenins, Hansen), 13:18.

Shootout—Vancouver (Burrows G, Vrbata G), N.Y. Rangers (Zuccarello NG, Stepan NG).

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 5-10-12-1-28. N.Y. Rangers 14-12-6-2-34.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 1-1; N.Y. Rangers 0 of 3.

Goalies—Vancouver, R. Miller 27-15-1 (34 shots). N.Y. Rangers, Talbot 9-5-3 (28 goals).

A-18,006 (18,006). T-2:43.

Capitals 5, Jets 1

Winnipeg	0	1	0	1
Washington	2	2	1	5

First Period—1, Washington, Carlson 9 (Backstrom, Johansson), 14:10 (pp), 2, Washington, Ovechkin 38 (Alzner, Niskanen), 15:25.

Second Period—3, Winnipeg, Enstrom 4 (Lad, Vachon), 10:10. 4, Washington, Backstrom 17 (Green, Brouwer), 13:07 (pp), 5, Washington, Backstrom 18 (Ovechkin, Johansson), 15:47 (pp).

Third Period—6, Washington, Brouwer 17, 13:53 (on-sh).

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 5-7-8-20.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 3; Washington 3 of 6.

Goalies—Winnipeg, Pavelec 13-13-17 (32 shots-28 saves). Washington, Holtby 28-12-9 (20-19).

A-18,506 (18,506). T-2:30.

Islanders 5, Predators 2

Nashville	1	1	0	2
N.Y. Islanders	3	0	5	2

First Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Strait 2 (Nielsen, Grabner), 1:00. 2, N.Y. Islanders, Boychuk 6 (Leddy, Grabner), 10:10. 3, N.Y. Islanders, Tavares 29 (Leddy, Boychuk), 18:21 (pp). 4, Nashville, Forsberg 29 (Josi, Smith), 19:42.

Second Period—5, Nashville, Neal 21 (Reiborn, Josi), 16:38.

Third Period—6, N.Y. Islanders, Leddy 8 (McDonald, Martin), 10:22. 7, N.Y. Islanders, Bailey 12 (Tavares, Almel), 8:41.

Shots on Goal—Nashville 17-6-7-32.

N.Y. Islanders 15-14-11-40.

Power-play opportunities—Nashville 0 of 3; N.Y. Islanders 1 of 5.

Goalies—Nashville, Rinne 34-8-2 (40 shots-35 saves). N.Y. Islanders, Halak 32-12-0 (32-30).

A-16,170 (16,170). T-2:30.

Sabres 3, Flyers 2 (SO)

Buffalo	1	1	0	0	3
Philadelphia	0	0	0	2	2

First Period—1, Buffalo, Deslauriers 5 (Flynn, Ristolainen, Deslauriers), 10:32. 2, Philadelphia, White 1 (Coburn, B.Schenn), 7:23.

Second Period—3, Buffalo, Gionta 6 (Mitchell, Moushinski), 3:4. Philadelphia, Voracek 19 (Simmonds, Couturier), 8:45 (pp).

Shootout—Buffalo 2 (Gionta G, Girgensohn NG, Ennis NG, Flynn NG), Philadelphia 1 (Voracek G, Girgensohn NG, Simmonds NG, Couturier NG).

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 6-11-12-3-32.

Power-play opportunities—Buffalo 0 of 3; Philadelphia 1 of 5.

Goalies—Buffalo, Neuvirth 4-15-32 (38 shots-35 saves). Philadelphia, Emery 10-10-4 (32-30).

A-19,472 (19,541). T-2:48.

Blue Jackets 2, Penguins 1

Columbus	1	0	1	2
Pittsburgh	0	1	0	1

First Period—1, Columbus, Hellebuyck 7 (Calvert, Tyutin), 17:45 (sh).

Second Period—2, Pittsburgh, Malkin 22 (Martin, Despres), 8:58.

Third Period—3, Columbus, Dubinsky 7 (Calvert, Tyutin), 17:45 (sh).

Shots on Goal—Columbus 11-8-11-30. Pittsburgh 30-19-11-30.

Power-play opportunities—Columbus 0 of 4; Pittsburgh 0 of 2.

Goalies—Columbus, McElhinney 10-9-1 (30 shots-29 saves). Pittsburgh, Fleury 25-13-3 (26-11).

A-18,597 (18,387). T-2:24.

Sharks 5, Stars 2

San Jose	2	2	5	2
Dallas	0	1	1	2

First Period—1, San Jose, Vlasic 7 (Couture, Poussin), 4:45.

Second Period—2, San Jose, Desjardins 3 (A. Bennett, Niemi), 4:44. Dallas, Dallas 15 (A. Bennett, Spezza), 8:00 (pp).

Third Period—1, San Jose, Vlasic 15 (A. Bennett, Dallas), 6:56. San Jose, Marleau 2 (Sheppard), 17:44. 2, San Jose, Winnik 12 (Pavelski, Dallas), 19:06 (sh).

Shots on Goal—San Jose 11-13-4-28.

Power-play opportunities—San Jose 0 of 2; Dallas 1 of 3.

Goalies—San Jose, Niemi 24-17-13 (37 shots-37 saves). Dallas, Lehtonen 25-19-17 (14).

A-17,568 (18,532). T-2:46.

Calendar

Feb. 21 — Stadium Series: Los Angeles vs. San Jose at Santa Clara, Calif.
March 2 — NHL trade deadline.
March 6-11 — NHL general managers meeting, Boca Raton, Fla.
April 15 — Stanley Cup playoffs begin.
April 16-26 — IHL Under-18 World Championship, Zug and Lucerne, Switzerland.
May 17-17 — IHL World Championship, Prague and Ostrava, Czech Republic.
June 17 — Last possible day for Stanley Cup final.
June 26-27 — NHL draft, Sunrise, Fla.
July 1 — Free agency begins.

OLYMPICS



AP photos

U.S. hockey team members pounce on goalie Jim Craig after their 4-3 victory over the Soviet Union on Feb. 22, 1980 at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y.

Years haven't faded 'Miracle'

Hockey gold medal turns 35

By JOHN KEKIS
The Associated Press

IT'S been more than three decades since his landmark goal became the centerpiece of the U.S. Olympic hockey team's Miracle on Ice. For 60-year-old Mike Eruzione, it still seems like only yesterday.

"It was a long time ago, but for me it's different," said Eruzione, whose game-winning goal against the Soviet Union in the medal round at the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics still sends chills down an awful lot of spines. "I deal with it so often it's hard to believe it's been 35 years. Every week I'm doing something or going somewhere that's associated with 1980."

With his inimitable deft touch, Hall of Fame coach Herb Brooks guided Eruzione and his fuzzy-faced teammates, college kids matched up against one of the best teams in hockey history. On Feb. 22, they triumphed with an improbable comeback.

The U.S. defeated the Soviets 4-3 on Eruzione's 30-foot shot midway through the third period to deprive them of what likely

would have been their sixth gold medal in seven Winter Olympics, then clinched the gold by rallying past Finland 4-2.

"It doesn't feel like yesterday," said Buzz Schneider, a winger on the U.S. team and today involved in real estate in Minnesota. "But people remind me all the time. It's just part of who we are, I guess."

There is excitement in the air again. Every surviving member of the hockey team — rugged defenseman Bob Suter died at 57 in September and coach Brooks was killed in a car accident in 2003 at age 66 — is coming back for a "Relive the Miracle" reunion on Saturday night at Herb Brooks Arena, the hockey rink they made famous.

The sociopolitical impact of that era has since faded. The memory of that February night in Lake Placid has not.

Never will.

"We were just coming off the Vietnam War and there was a lot of anti-nationalistic mood and rhetoric in this country," said Ed Weibrecht, then-president of the Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce and owner of the Mirror Lake Inn with wife Lisa. "There wasn't a level of national pride that



Above: U.S. captain Mike Eruzione scored the winning goal against the Soviet Union. Right: Herb Brooks guided the Americans to one of the biggest upsets in Olympic hockey history.



I think we have today.

"A tear almost comes to my eyes — that was so overwhelming," Weibrecht said. "At the end of the game, all you could hear was the chant: 'USA! USA! USA!' And when the people poured out into the street, that's all you could hear for an hour up and down Main Street. People really, really became proud to be Americans again. It was incredible."

NBA

Roundup

Spurs' plan backfires in LA loss

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — DeAndre Jordan gets tired of teams playing Hack-a-D.J. Tim Duncan doesn't like it, either, although he knows it's a useful strategy against a mediocre free-throw shooter like Jordan.

It just backfired on the Spurs.

Jordan had 26 points and 18 rebounds, Jamal Crawford added 26 points and the Los Angeles Clippers won 119-115 Thursday night, increasing their lead over the Spurs by 1½ games in the West.

"I'm big, I have feelings, too," Jordan said jokingly before turning serious. "I just hate that we can't just run and play."

Jordan was 10-for-28 from the line, getting in plenty of practice to go with his work-out of games. He and Duncan even chatted about the Spurs' hacking strategy.

"Unless it gets outlawed, it's part of basketball," Duncan said. "He's going to shoot 50 (percent) or below. When he starts shooting better, people will stop doing it."

Chris Paul had 22 points and 16 assists, and the Clippers outscored the Spurs 56-46 in the paint despite the absence of Blake Griffin, who is recovering from right elbow surgery. They improved to 3-1 without their All-Star forward.

"Everybody has had to step up," Paul said. "Blake is a guy that no one person can replace."

Duncan had 30 points and 11 rebounds and Tony Parker had 21 points and 13 assists for the Spurs, who had their two-game winning streak end in their first game since the All-Star break. Kawhi Leonard, who came in averaging 15.4 points, went 1-for-11 from the floor and missed all six of his three-point attempts.

Thunder 104, Mavericks 89: Russell Westbrook had 34 points and 10 assists for host Oklahoma City.

Serge Ibaka had 21 points and a career-high 22 rebounds and reserve guard Anthony Morrow added 16 points for the Thunder, who won for the sixth time in seven games. They moved into a tie with Phoenix for eighth place in the Western Conference.

Oklahoma City rolled, despite getting just 12 points from Kevin Durant.

Dirk Nowitzki had 14 points and Tyson Chandler added 10 points and 13 rebounds for the Mavericks, who shot a season-low 36.3 percent from the field.



KEVIN SULLIVAN, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/AP

The Clippers' DeAndre Jordan scores past the Spurs' Marco Belinelli, left, and Tim Duncan during the second half of Thursday's 119-115 Los Angeles win.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	36	17	.680	—
Brooklyn	21	31	.404	14½
Boston	20	31	.392	15
Philadelphia	12	41	.226	24
New York	8	43	.189	26

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	43	11	.796	—
Washington	33	21	.611	—
Charlotte	20	30	.423	20
Miami	22	30	.423	20
Orlando	17	39	.304	27

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	24	20	.530	—
Cleveland	33	22	.600	1½
Milwaukee	30	23	.565	3½
Detroit	21	33	.389	13
Indiana	21	33	.389	13

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	39	14	.736	—
Houston	36	17	.679	3
Dallas	36	20	.643	4½
San Antonio	24	20	.550	12

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	36	17	.679	—
Oklahoma City	29	25	.537	7½
Denver	20	33	.377	16
Utah	19	34	.358	17
Minnesota	11	42	.208	25

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	42	9	.824	—
L.A. Clippers	36	19	.655	8
Phoenix	29	25	.537	14½
Sacramento	18	34	.346	24½
L.A. Lakers	13	39	.245	30

Thursday's games

Oklahoma City 104, Dallas 89

Friday's games

Indiana at Philadelphia

New Orleans at Orlando

Toronto at Atlanta

Chicago at Detroit

Miami at New York

Phoenix at Washington

Houston at Dallas

Denver at Milwaukee

Portland at Utah

Boston at Sacramento

San Antonio at Golden State

Brooklyn at L.A. Lakers

Saturday's games

Oklahoma City at Charlotte

New Orleans at Miami

Phoenix at Chicago

Toronto at Houston

Sacramento at L.A. Clippers

Sunday's games

Cleveland at New York

Atlanta at Milwaukee

Washington at Detroit

Philadelphia at Orlando

Golden State at Indiana

Denver at Oklahoma City

Charlotte at Dallas

Memphis at Portland

Boston at L.A. Lakers

Thursday

Clippers 119, Spurs 115

SAN ANTONIO — Leonard 21-4-4, Duncan 12-14-5-30, Baynes 6-9-2-14, Parker 8-17-4-21, Green 4-6-0-9, Ginobili 3-4-1-2-10, Splitter 3-4-5-6-11, Diaw 1-3-0-0-3, Mills 1-7-0-0-2, Belinelli 4-9-0-11, Bonner 0-0-0-0-0, Totals 43-84-19-23 115.

L.A. CLIPPERS — Barnes 4-7-3-4-11, Hawes 3-7-1-2-7, Jordan 8-11-10-28, Paul 9-16-2-2-2, Redick 6-13-2-15, Crawford 8-15-5-6-26, Davis 4-6-2-5-10, Turkoglu 0-2-2-2-2, Totals 42-77-27-52 119.

San Antonio 24 31 37 27-115
L.A. Clippers 27 25 38 29-119

Three-Point Goals — San Antonio 10-28 (Ginobili 4, Belinelli 3, Baynes 2, Duncan 1-1, Diaw 1-1, Parker 1-2, Green 1-3, Mills 0-5, Leonard 0-6), L.A. Clippers 8-19 (Crawford 5-7, Paul 2-4, Redick 1-5, Hawes 0-1, Turkoglu 0-1, Barnes 0-1), Fouled Out — None. Total Fouls — San Antonio 46 (Duncan 11), L.A. Clippers 59 (Jordan 18), Assists — San Antonio 34 (Parker 13), L.A. Clippers 26 (Paul 10), Total Fouls — San Antonio 32, L.A. Clippers 22. A — 19,358 (18,060).

Thunder 104, Mavericks 89

DALLAS — Parsons 3-12-0-8, Nowitzki 6-16-2-14, Chandler 4-10-2-3-10, Rondo 2-9-1-2-5, Ellis 2-13-2-7, Aminu 2-7-2-8, Out-Nore 1-2-0-0-0, Total Fouls — Dallas 48-21-11, Jefferson 1-10-0-2, Barea 3-6-0-7, Totals 32-51-14-77 89.

Oklahoma City — Durant 4-14-2-2-12, Ibaka 8-12-5-6-21, Collison 1-7-0-0-2, Westbrook 9-17-14-3-6, Thornton 2-6-0-2, Walters 4-9-0-0-8, McCary 2-5-0-2-4, Out-Nore 1-2-0-0-0, Lamb 1-3-0-0-3, Totals 38-51-21-104.

Dallas 19 17 29-89
Oklahoma City 25 27 31-104

Three-Point Goals — Dallas 9-27 (Aminu 2-4, Villanueva 2-5, Parsons 2-5, Barea 1-1, Harris 1-2, Ellis 1-5, Nowitzki 0-3), Oklahoma City 7-22 (Westbrook 3-4, Morrow 2-5, Durant 1-2, Westbrook 1-2, Walters 0-1, Robertson 0-2, Collison 0-2), Fouled Out — None. Total Fouls — Oklahoma City 23, Dallas 14 (Barea 22), Assists — Dallas 16 (Rondo 6), Oklahoma City 20 (Westbrook 10), Total Fouls — Dallas 20, Oklahoma City 24. A — 18,203 (18,203).

Teams wheel and deal at trade deadline

BY BRIAN MAHONEY

The Associated Press

The No. 8 seeds suddenly look like more than first-round fodder.

Oklahoma City and Miami were two of the biggest winners on trade deadline day, making themselves not only strong enough to hold off the teams behind them, but perhaps challenge the ones way ahead.

Even the powerful ones they could meet to open the postseason.

The Heat were certainly talking big after acquiring Goran Dragic from Phoenix.

"We are incredibly pleased to take another step in getting the Miami Heat back to real championship prominence with the acquisition of Goran Dragic," Heat President Pat Riley said. "Goran is an All-NBA player, including

the Most Improved Player last season, and we felt that once he became available, we would do all that we could to acquire him."

Dragic had made it clear he wasn't planning to re-sign in Phoenix, just as Reggie Jackson had made it known he wasn't long for Oklahoma City. But rather than risk losing Jackson for nothing, the Thunder used him as one of the pieces to fill out their roster.

He went to Detroit in a three-way trade with Utah that brought center Enes Kanter and forward Steve Novak from the Jazz, along with guard D.J. Augustin, forward Kyle Singler and a second-round pick from the Pistons.

The Thunder are tied with Phoenix at 29-25, though would earn the No. 8 spot via season series tiebreaker at the moment.

Still, the Suns felt they couldn't take a chance of keeping Dragic for a playoff push when he said this week he no longer trusted the organization.

The Heat jumped in, giving up two first-round picks in the package to get him.

"I did feel it was time to find a better fit," Dragic wrote on Twitter, adding "NOW it's #fateation time and I'm excited to bring the Dragon's fire to Miami!"

The Suns will replace Dragic with Brandon Knight, one of the many point guards moving so quickly it made the trade deadline a transition game. He was acquired from Milwaukee, which will fill his spot with last season's Rookie of the Year, Michael Carter-Williams of Philadelphia.

There were 12 trades involving 39 players. So many were on the

move in deals agreed to shortly before the 3 p.m. EST deadline that most of the transactions took hours for the NBA to approve.

Even backup point guards seemed in demand, with players such as Isaiah Thomas (Boston), Ramon Sessions (Washington), Andre Miller (Sacramento), Norris Cole (New Orleans) and Pablo Prigioni (Houston) getting new homes.

Kevin Garnett got an old one, waiving his no-trade clause so Brooklyn could send him to Minnesota, where he spent the first 12 seasons of his career and led the Timberwolves to their only eight playoff appearances.

Portland got Arron Afflalo from Denver in the first completed deal of the day, adding his 14.5 points per game to strengthen its bench.

COLLEGE

Wiltjer, Gonzaga get past Pacific

By JOSH DUBOW
The Associated Press

STOCKTON, Calif. — Gonzaga prides itself on having a balanced offense with many different options to beat an opponent. Against Pacific, Kyle Wiltjer was the only option needed.

Wiltjer had 45 points in Gonzaga's highest-scoring game in 54 years and the third-ranked Bulldogs tied a school record with their 20th straight win, 86-74 over Pacific on Thursday night.

"He started early and finished late," coach Mark Few said. "There are some days he starts late. This was one where he was on it all night. His teammates did a great job of finding him and looking for him and understanding that."

Gary Bell Jr. added 12 points as the Bulldogs (27-1, 15-0 West Coast Conference) used another strong shooting night to roll to a victory. Gonzaga, which leads the nation in shooting at 52.7 percent, made 60 percent of its shots, keyed

by a 15-for-22 night by Wiltjer. Wiltjer had the third-highest scoring game in school history and the most points since Frank Burgess scored a school-record 52 on Jan. 26, 1961.

"I was just in the zone," he said. "My teammates just got me the ball. I wasn't thinking of it and it just happened."

T.J. Wallace scored 19 points, David Taylor added 18 and Ray Bowles had 13 for the Tigers (10-17, 2-13), who have lost eight straight games.

The Bulldogs struggled to pull away from the last-place Tigers after opening up a double-digit lead midway through the first half. Taylor hit three of his five three-pointers early in the second half and Pacific got the deficit down to seven with just under 7 minutes left.

But Wiltjer hit a three-pointer and a pair of layups to build the lead back to 11, as the Bulldogs cruised to maintain their perfect conference record.



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

Gonzaga players celebrate in the closing moments of their 86-74 win over Pacific in Stockton, Calif., on Thursday.

Top 25 roundup Arizona routs USC

The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Arizona re-tired the jersey of former player Jason Terry at halftime.

The program's current players spent the rest of the night mimicking Terry's famous jet glide celebration — and there was a lot of celebrating.

Playing like it should against a last-place team, No. 7 Arizona avoided looking ahead to a big showdown this weekend by jumping on Southern California early in an 87-57 rout Thursday night.

On a night of celebrations, Arizona (23-3, 11-2 Pac-12) took care of business quickly, overwhelming the Trojans with a slew of dunks and easy baskets at the rim. The Wildcats, most of them wearing long socks as Terry did from 1995-99, led by 18 at halftime and cruised through the second half for their 35th straight home win.

"It was just a team idea," Arizona point guard T.J. McConnell said of honoring Terry. "Doing the socks and the celebration after you make a three, just giving back to him for everything he did for this school."

Kaleb Tarczewski set the tone early, scoring 13 of his 15 points in the first half while grabbing nine rebounds.

Freshman Stanley Johnson had another solid all-around game, finishing with 13 points, seven rebounds and six assists. Rondae Hollis-Jefferson finished with 12 points and seven rebounds.

Malik Martin had 15 points and Julian Jacobs added 13 for USC. **No. 9 Utah 47, Oregon State 37:** Dakari Tucker scored 11 points as the visiting Utes handed the Beavers their first home loss in 15 games.

Delon Wright added nine points, nine rebounds and five assists for Utah (21-4, 11-2 Pac-12).

Malcom Duvivier scored 12 points for Oregon State (16-10, 7-7).

Both teams scrambled and scrapped on defense, making for a low-scoring affair.

Utah shot 42.5 percent for the game while Oregon State shot 33.3 percent.

Seven minutes in, Utah was up 5-4. The Utes had five shots and four turnovers at that point, while the Beavers were shooting only 2-for-9.

No. 21 SMU 67, Temple 58: Nic Moore scored 18 points, and the host Mustangs rallied from 10 points down in the second half to snap the Owls' seven-game winning streak.

Ryan Manuel hit a tying three-pointer and added another to cap a 7-0 run that broke a 52-52 tie and sent the American Athletic Conference-leading Mustangs (22-5, 13-2 AAC) to their 20th win in 22 games.

Will Cummings had 14 points to lead Temple (19-8, 10-4), which was trying to answer a home loss to SMU last month but instead shot 30 percent after halftime to lose its lead.

Trimble leads Terps over Nebraska

By DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Maryland was locked in another close game when Melo Trimble let the ball fly from well beyond the three-point circle as the shot clock was about to expire.

Swish. The freshman guard did it again just over a minute later, and soon after, the 16th-ranked Terrapins were celebrating a gritty 69-65 victory over Nebraska on Thursday night.

Trimble scored 26 points on 7-for-9 shooting and made 10 of 11 free throws. He also led Maryland with six rebounds and five assists.

"Melo was terrific down the stretch," Terrapins coach Mark Turgeon said. "The kids just a winner. I've been saying that to get it we got him. It sure is nice to have him. I'll tell you that."

Dez Wells and Jake Layman each scored 14 for the Terrapins (22-5, 10-4 Big Ten), who were tied with 5.38 left before Trimble took over.

After Wells made two free throws, Trimble beat the clock with a jumper from atop the key. He connected again from beyond the arc with 2:18 remaining for a 62-54 lead.

"That's what I do when the clock is winding down, I want to take the three or get to the basket," Trimble said. "Mostly, I want to take the three. That's what I did tonight."

Said Turgeon: "The second one was really deep. I was like, 'I just hope he has enough legs to get it there.'"

Nebraska played excellent defense right up until the shot clock



PATRICK SEMANSKI/AP

Maryland guard Melo Trimble drives down the court as Nebraska guard Benny Parker (3) falls on top of teammate Walter Pitchford on Thursday in College Park, Md. Trimble scored a game-high 26 points in Maryland's 69-65 win.

was about to expire. And then ... "Trimble made huge plays down the stretch," Huskers coach Tim Miles said. "He really hurt us. Those are the two three's I re-

member that seemed like the daggers. They might have hit some free throws, too."

Trimble scored 11 straight points for Maryland in the closing

minutes, the last five at the foul line.

The Terrapins have won their last three games by a total of 11 points and are 8-0 in games decided by six points or fewer.

"We've been really good in close games," Maryland guard Richard Pack said. "I think it's just an attitude, so far. We just expect to win and make great plays down the stretch. When we need to focus and make the right plays, we do it."

Walter Pitchford scored 19 and Shavon Shields added 13 for Nebraska (13-13, 5-9). Terran Pette-way, who came in averaging 18.7 points, was held to eight on 2-for-14 shooting but contributed nine assists.

The Huskers have lost four straight and six of seven, but they gave the Terrapins all they could handle in this one.

A three-pointer by Pitchford got the Huskers to 65-62 on 29 seconds left. Nebraska gained possession on a steal. But Wells stole the ball and Trimble made two free throws on the other end to clinch it.

"I never thought we were going to lose," Turgeon said. Maryland improved to 16-1 at home, 7-0 in the Big Ten.

After Nebraska made the first two baskets of the second half to go up 38-34, Trimble hit a runner to spark a 10-0 run that put Maryland up by six.

Maryland led 50-48 when Pette-way was called for his fourth foul with 8:05 left. Two straight field goals by Shields knotted the score at 52 with 6:59 to go, setting the stage for the exciting finish.

DAYTONA 500

No day for mourning

On 14th anniversary of NASCAR legend's death, Junior remembers 'awesome times'

By MARK LONG
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. recognized the anniversary of his father's death, saying it was not a day for mourning.

Junior took to Twitter on Wednesday to acknowledge the 14th anniversary of Dale Earnhardt's death, which came on the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500. Earnhardt Jr. posted, "(On) this day I do not mourn his death. I thank God he lived. #DaleEarnhardt."

Asked about it later in the day at Daytona International Speedway, he said the date doesn't really stir painful, inward emotions anymore.

"His loss affected a lot of people, not just myself," Earnhardt Jr. said. "At the same time, you're fortunate to have known him and fortunate to have learned and have the experiences that you had with him. So you think about those and be glad that was an opportunity you got to experience."

Earnhardt noticed people thinking about the anniversary Wednesday morning and decided to share his thoughts on social media.

"I just felt like pitching in and let people know where my mind was at," he said. "In-

stead of being sad about it, I think about all the awesome times we had and good things we did and stuff that I think he'd be proud of today."

The 40-year-old Earnhardt won his second Daytona 500 last year and will try to become the first driver since Sterling

Marlin in 1995 to win NASCAR's most prestigious race in consecutive years.

"Being the winner from last year doesn't really help you out there in the heat of the battle," Earnhardt said. "We've got a great car. We need to do everything right. We need to get that car all the way through the week and on to the starting grid Sunday."

"We don't need to have any problems to where we have to pull any race cars out of the trailer. I've had to do that before."

Earnhardt's No. 88 Chevrolet failed inspection following pole qualifying for the Daytona 500 on Sunday. He had to start at the back of the field in the first

of Thursday's two qualifying races that set the starting order.

"You definitely want to race hard and do everything you can and learn everything you can during the week, but you want to be able to put that car on the starting grid in one piece," he said. "I think we've got one of the best cars down here."

'Instead of being sad about it, I think about all the awesome times we had and good things we did and stuff that I think he'd be proud of today.'

Dale Earnhardt Jr.

on the 14th anniversary of the death of his father, NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt Sr.



TERRY RENNA/AP

Dale Earnhardt Jr. said on Wednesday that the anniversary of the death of his father, NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt Sr., no longer stirs painful emotions. Earnhardt Jr. died on the final lap of the Daytona 500 in 2001.

Things to know

6-time champ Johnson understands pressure Tiger faces

From wire reports

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Here are some things to know about what's going on at Daytona International Speedway, where drivers are preparing for Sunday's season-opening Daytona 500:

Winning ways: Jimmie Johnson understands the pressure the best athletes face because he's in that category.

When a season ends without a championship for Johnson, it seems like a disappointment. Such was the case in 2014 even though he won four races, had 11 top-five runs and 20 top-10s.

That's why Johnson feels for Tiger Woods, who falls in a similar category. If Woods isn't winning major championships in golf, people wonder why. Johnson has the same issue in non-championship seasons after winning five straight between 2006-10, and again in 2012.

"Anybody in sports that dominates, everybody has a visual in their mind of them at their peak, and it's tough to watch somebody struggle along," Johnson said. "I would love to see him come back, being in my position."

Johnson, who won the second of Thursday's Budweiser Dual



TERRY RENNA/AP

Jimmie Johnson crosses the finish line to win the second of two qualifying races for the Daytona 500 on Thursday.

races, doesn't face as many hurdles as Woods in getting back to a championship level. After all, he wasn't that far off last year. He was knocked out in the Contender Round, when the field drops from 12 to eight.

So that's why Johnson goes into this season confident he can con-

tend once again. The new Chase format makes it more unpredictable, along with more exciting, with the championship boiling down to the final week.

It's hard to see someone duplicate Johnson's run of five consecutive championships under this format, but he'll settle for another

one this season. And then try to keep that streak going forward.

Chase eligibility: NASCAR has updated eligibility for drivers to qualify for the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship. Drivers must start all races to be eligible for the 10-race Chase. Under the previous rule, drivers needed just to attempt to qualify for every race.

A driver does not lose Chase eligibility for attempting to qualify for a race and failing to make the field.

NASCAR could offer waivers in certain circumstances like it did last season for Tony Stewart and this season for Brian Vickers. He will miss the Daytona 500 and next week's race in Atlanta following heart surgery.

Historic starter: NASCAR named series official Kim Lopez as the chief starter for Sunday's Daytona 500.

Lopez will become the first woman and first Hispanic to flag the race. Lopez is in her 11th season with NASCAR and has flagged races for the past seven years in the Xfinity Series and Truck Series. She also flagged two Sprint Cup races last season.

The chief starter displays the

eight flags that tell the drivers to start, slow down, move over or stop. Lopez also will wave the checkered flag when the winner crosses the finish line.

Lopez says: "You have little girls who can now look up and say, 'I can do this someday, I can be this someday.'"

Qualifying changes: Just days after Daytona 500 pole qualifying turned into a debacle, NASCAR has tweaked qualifying procedures for its lower series at Daytona International Speedway.

The Xfinity and Camping World Truck fields will be divided into four groups instead of two for the first round and it will last 2½ minutes instead of five. That should force cars to leave pit road instead of playing cat-and-mouse games with competitors.

NASCAR also will stage cars on pit road in a single file before the clock starts. When the cars pull out of line, they must leave pit road.

On Sunday, the Daytona 500 qualifying session was done in knockout rounds for the first time in 57 years. Drivers jockeyed for position on pit road, leading to a traffic jam.

SPORTS



Hack-a-D.J.

Clippers' Jordan makes Spurs pay for strategy » **NBA, Page 28**

DAYTONA 500



Danica Patrick (10) spins as she's hit by Bobby Labonte on Thursday during the second of two qualifying races for the Daytona 500 in Daytona Beach, Fla.

JOHN CHILTON/AP

Junior, Johnson take Duels

Patrick wrecks, still qualifies

By JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Jimmie Johnson swept the Budweiser Duel races Thursday to give Hendrick Motorsports a 1-2-3 start for Sunday's Daytona 500, while Danica Patrick and Denny Hamlin were involved in altercations on the track and off.

With Jeff Gordon having already won the pole for the opening race of the NASCAR Sprint Cup series, the rest of the field was decided through two qualifying races of 150 miles.

Patrick was in the second race and needed to finish 15th or better to guarantee a spot Sunday. She looked like she'd make it until a crash with Hamlin damaged her car and put her in danger of missing the field.

Her Stewart-Haas Racing team worked

Inside:

- Earnhardt marks 14th anniversary of his father's death, Page 31
- Stewart-Haas Racing trying to come back from tough season, Page 30

frantically on rapid repairs and she restarted 18th with two laps to go. She was pushed all the way around Daytona International Speedway by teammate Kurt Busch to finish 10th and make the 500.

"There's a lot of stressing out. For my

SEE DUELS ON PAGE 30



TERRY RENNA/AP

Dale Earnhardt Jr. raises the trophy in Victory Lane after winning the first of Thursday's two qualifying races.



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Jimmie Johnson will start third in Sunday's Daytona 500 behind Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Islanders halt Predators' six-game winning streak

NHL, Page 26

Heisman winner Mariota in spotlight at combine

NFL, Page 25